

Clinton County Sesquicentennial

Atwell Simmons first settler in Riley Township

Editor's Note: In celebration of the sesquicentennial of Clinton County, the Clinton County News in cooperation with the Clinton County Historical Society and Clinton County Archives will present weekly features about individuals and happenings in Clinton County from years ago.

Following is this week's feature, written by Ken Coin, about Atwell and Lovina (Knapp) Simmons.

By KEN COIN

The first settlement in what would become Riley Township began in the summer of 1836 when Atwell Simmons made a trip from his home in Salem, Washtenaw County to the Scott settlement on the Looking Glass River.

He made the trip with the intentions of surveying the surrounding country side in hopes of locating some favorable governmental land.

His wife had given him explicit instructions that any land he considered for a new home should contain a good sugarbush and be in close proximity to a lake, a throw back to her girlhood days spent near Honeoye Lake in Ontario County, New York.

ATWELL WAS impressed with the land near the "Scotts." The parcels he noted and eventually purchased from the government land office at Kalamazoo on July 30, 1836, lay in Riley and Olive townships.

He was also able to oblige his wife's requirements as Muskrat Lake was but a short distance off and the sugarbush which was on the tract would later gain a reputation as one of the best in southern Clinton County.

Atwell Simmons was born in Bristol, Ontario County, New York on Sept. 26, 1806, the son of Ephriam and Lydia (Bowen) Simmons.

His entire youth was spent in that region and in November of 1830 he was married to Lovina Knapp.

She was born on May 22, 1805, at Nassau, Rensselaer County, New York, the daughter of Samuel and Polly (Hines) Knapp. As a young girl, her parents had moved to Ontario where the remainder of her youth was spent.

IN 1832, Atwell and Lovina moved to Michigan territory, settling in Salem Township. Here, two children were born to them, George Riley and Amina Louisa.

In November of 1836, after proper preparations, the Simmons family set out in a wagon, drawn by oxen, with one cow tied to the rear of the wagon box. Regarding their early life in Riley Township, the following was written early in this century by their great-granddaughter, Agnes (Pike) Steinhardt.



THIS PHOTOGRAPH of the descendants of Atwell and Lovina (Knapp) Simmons was taken in Riley Township in 1900. Standing (left to right): Jerome Dills, Estella (Cook) Dills, George R. Simmons, Elizabeth (Tucker) Simmons, Edna (Randall) Pike, Agnes (Pike) Steinhardt, unknown, unknown, Marc. D.L.

Photograph courtesy Faye Hansen Public Library
Cutler, Maud (Randall) Cutler. Seated (left to right): Amori B. Cook, David Scott Pike, Viola (Cook) Pike, Ella (Simmons) Pike, Ida (Cook) Randall, Amina (Simmons) Cook, unknown, Millard Filmore Pike.

Simmons

"The roads were in a terrible condition and the oxen were often mired. After a six day journey they arrived in DeWitt. Leaving his family with William Webb and his wife who lived about a mile west of the Scott settlement, Atwell went on to cut a road through the forest and to build a log cabin for a home.

THIS CABIN was 14 by 16 feet, built without boards or nails. Logs were fastened together with wooden pins. A shake roof was bound on with poles. A puncheon floor of split logs with a space in front of a large fireplace, filled with clay for a hearth and with a quilt hung in place for a door, Atwell brought his family home.

The time required to build this crude cabin was less than two weeks. Later, a door was made of the dry goods box in which their goods were packed while moving.

Here, in an unbroken wilderness, with many wild animals about and only Indians for callers, Atwell began clearing the land. Water was obtained from a spring a short distance west of the cabin.

One day the little boy, George, was sent to the spring with a small pail for water. He soon ran back to the cabin exclaiming, 'I found a little doggie but it ran away and wouldn't play with me.'

THE PARENTS soon learned that it was a wolf instead of a dog.

With no fences, the cattle often strayed some

distance from the cabin. One night, Lovina went in search of the cow and became lost in the woods. She found a tree which had fallen and become lodged in another. Climbing this tree she waited the coming of day break. Towards morning she was startled by the sound of a gun. Fearing Indians, she remained quiet until the lights came near. Then, she was overjoyed to find that her husband and another pioneer were searching for her."

Atwell held many positions in local affairs, especially the schools of which he was a generous benefactor. Lovina is credited with giving Riley Township its name. She used the same as a middle name for her son, George Riley Simmons.

Atwell died in Riley Township on Oct. 27, 1881, and Lovina remained there until the time of her death on April 30, 1891.

GEORGE R. SIMMONS who had come to Clinton County with his parents at the age of four, married his former school teacher, Elizabeth Tucker on Dec. 21, 1853.

She had come to the area in 1850 with her parents, Hiram and Lucy (Smith) Tucker. Following their marriage, George and Elizabeth took over part of his parents' homestead, the portion which lay in Olive Township and remained there first in a small abandoned log cabin and later in a fine frame house until

1882 when they retired to DeWitt.

They had two children who lived to maturity, Hiram Atwell Simmons and Ella (Mrs. Millard Filmore Pike).

Amina Louisa Simmons, a mere infant of four months when her parents brought her to Clinton County, married a young man from an adjoining homestead, Amori B. Cook on Sept. 20, 1853.

He had come with his parents, Joseph and Charlotte (Herrick) Cook to Riley in 1840.

His father had, however, made an earlier appearance in 1838 at which time he purchased the land and built a log house. Following their marriage, Amori and Amina occupied a log cabin on the Cook homestead.

Their homes improved with time and they remained on this homestead until their deaths. They had three daughters who grew to adulthood, E. Estella (Mrs. Jerome Dills), Ida O. (Mrs. William Randall), and Viola H. (Mrs. David Scott Pike).

Atwell and Lovina (Knapp) Simmons were both members of a large complex family network which extended back to Puritan New England (perhaps earlier).

INTERMARRIAGE WITHIN the extended family, typical of many early American families, was commonplace: Atwell's father wed, for a second mar-

riage, Lovina's aunt and Lovina's cousin married Atwell's sister.

The practice perpetuated onto Atwell and Lovina's descendants as their grandson, Hiram Simmons, married Atwell's brother's step-daughter, Carrie Swift; their granddaughter, Viola Cook married her own second cousin (and a foster son of her father's sister) David Scott Pike, also a granddaughter of Atwell and Lovina and the practice, perhaps, concluded in the Dec. 13, 1905, marriage of the Simmons' great-grandson, George S. Pike, to another great-grandchild, Edna Randall.

Now, while all of this may sound like a genealogist's nightmare, it is presented here as an example of normal family ties in 19th century Clinton County.

Equally, it is an important concept to remember when researching any aspect of early Clinton County history. The main reason, however, is that people came to this county or relocated within it because of family connections, often hidden by the passing of generations.

Atwell and Lovina Simmons were also important pioneers within their own extended family as the first to come to Clinton County. Many other close and distant branches of the Simmons and Knapp families would follow their lead.



Louina (Knapp) Simmons



Metropolitan Art Gallery

Don W. Smith Lansing, Mich.

Simmons

Dewitt

Obituary.

Richmond Simmons was born in Salem, Michigan, January 16th, 1848. After finishing in the common school, he attended the medical school at Ann Arbor. After graduating from there he attended the Fultz Homopathic medical college in Cincinnati. After graduating from there he came to Dewitt and began the practice of medicine in the spring of 1874.

He was united in marriage to Miss Martha E. Smith of Dewitt, March 6th, 1875. Two sons were born to them, J. L. Simmons of Dewitt and D. R. Simmons of Detroit. He practiced medicine successfully for thirty years. Then poor health caused him to retire. He was a great sufferer for ten years from a complication of diseases but bore them patiently until he quietly and peacefully passed away on Sunday evening, April 22. He leaves to mourn the loss of a kind husband and father, his faithful wife, who cared for him tenderly for so many years, his two sons and five grandchildren. He was a member of the Sir Knights in Lansing, F. and A. M., in Dewitt, also O. E. S., M. W. A., and R. N. of A., and a member of Clinton county pioneer society and was a member of Dewitt Grange at one time. His family have the sympathy of all in their sad bereavement.

The funeral was held at the home Wednesday, Rev. F. C. Alldinger of Lansing assisted by Rev. T. H. Wright, officiating. Interment in Dewitt cemetery. The funeral was held under the auspices of the F. and A. M. lodge.

Obituary.

A baby girl was born to Mr. and Mrs. Victor Henning, Monday, April 22. Its stay was very brief, although so welcome in the home. It was beautiful and looked like a child several weeks old. The bereaved parents have the sympathy of all. So many plans had been made for it and so much pleasure had been anticipated, but the all wise Father saw fit to take it home to himself.

Another little lamb has gone
To dwell with him who gave
Another little darling babe
Is sheltered in the grave.
God needed one more angel child,
Amidst his shining band,
And so he bent with loving smile,
And clasped our darling's hand.

Clinton Rep. 4-26-1917

St Johns News
4-4-1907

GEORGE R. SIMMONS DEAD

ANOTHER PROMINENT DEWITT MAN IS GONE.

DeWitt again loses a prominent citizen in George R. Simmons who died yesterday morning. Mr. Simmons was born in Salem, Washtenaw county, on January 23, 1833, accompanying his father to Riley in 1836, where on December 21, 1863, he married Elizabeth Tucker of Riley. Seven years later they moved to Olive, where they lived till about 25 years ago when they moved to DeWitt.

Thirteen years ago he had a paralytic stroke, and has been in poor health more or less ever since.

Of their five children only one is living, Mrs. Millard Pike of Olive. His wife died February 5. The funeral will be held Friday, meeting at the house and thence to the M. E. church where Mrs. O. J. C. Woodman of Paw Paw, of the Universalist church, will conduct services. Mr. Simmons having been a member of that church. The Masons will also take part.

The deceased was prominent in many ways. He was a staunch Republican and had been township treasurer several years. He was also master of his Masonic lodge, a member of the Eastern Star order, a charter member of Olive Grange, and a member of the Pioneer society.

This is the fifteenth funeral in DeWitt since New Year's.

2-21-1907

THE S

DEWITT.

PIONEER OF CLINTON COUNTY

MRS. GEORGE R. SIMMONS PASSED AWAY LAST FRIDAY.

Mrs. George R. Simmons, a pioneer of Clinton county, died last Friday morning in her seventy-third year. She was born at Owego, N. Y., December 23, 1834, and moved with her parents to Riley township at the age of fifteen. Her maiden name was Elizabeth Tucker and she married George R. Simmons on December 21, 1853. They moved to Olive, where they resided until twenty-three years ago, when they became residents of DeWitt.

Mrs. Simmons was the mother of five children, only one of whom, Mrs. Millard Pike of Olive, survives. Mrs. Simmons was a member of the Eastern Star and a charter member of the Olive grange.

She also leaves a brother Joseph Tucker and one sister, Mrs. T. W. Barton, four grandchildren and one great-grandson. The funeral was held Sunday, Dr. George Stocking of Lansing officiating; interment in DeWitt cemetery.

St Johns News

4-4-1907

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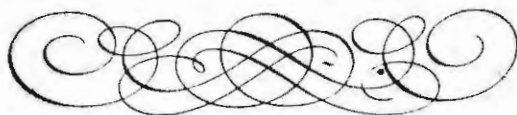
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DeWitt-- Yesterday and Today

THE ADVERTISER
Thursday, February 13, 1975

By Faye Hanson



THIS IS A CLIPPING FROM AN 1891 PAPER: Wednesday May 22, about 75 friends and neighbors of Mrs. Levina Simmons called at her home in Riley (house still standing on the corner of Airport and Chadwick Roads) to celebrate her eighty fourth birthday, and though it was not a surprise party, it was really surprising to see a lady of her age with the apparent health and vigor of half her number of years. Her first home in Clinton County was on the farm where she now resides and where she has been a continuous resident for fifty-three years. (She and her husband, Atwell, were the first settlers in Riley Township). A nice rocker was presented as a token of friendship; also a silk handkerchief and a shoulder shawl by Seth Hunt and lady of St. Johns, other handkerchiefs by friends, an apron by Mrs. Cook (her daughter) and some very beautiful lace by Mrs. Ida Knapp. Music and dancing, in which Mrs. Simmons joined, helped to pass away the afternoon which all declared, had gone too soon. As usual a bountiful repast was provided and partaken of with relish after which all returned to their homes, hoping to meet again on her next birthday.

Direct descendants of Mrs. Simmons living in the DeWitt area now are Neil Cutler, Gerald Pike, Martha Reed and Bonnie Ward. - Clipping loaned by Mrs and Mrs. Burl Dieter and photograph from my collection purchased from the late Maud Cutler Estate.

Simmons

PIONEER OF RILEY SLEPT INTO DEATH

MRS. AMINA COOK DIED AT HER
HOME FRIDAY NIGHT.

Was Distinguished as Living in Riley
Longer Than Any Other Person—
Resided on Farm Since '53.

Mrs. Amina Cook, wife of Amori B. Cook, died at her home in Riley township Friday night, July 22d, 1910.

Mrs. Cook was stricken with paralysis Monday, June 17th, 1910. After dinner Monday she lay down to rest. Paralysis came while she was sleeping. She aroused enough to know her people and Wednesday morning seemed quite improved but before noon the second call came. She seemed to sleep until Friday night at 11 o'clock she peacefully passed to the better land.

Miss Amina Simmons was born in Salem, Washtenaw county, Mich., July 24, 1836. The following November she accompanied her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Atwell Simmons, to Riley township. This was the first family to settle in Riley, then an unbroken wilderness. The hardships and privations which these early pioneers underwent can not be told. Only those who went through the same thrilling experiences can realize.

In a short time after Mr. Simmons moved his family to Riley, Amori B. Cook accompanied by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cook, came from Livingston county, N. Y., and settled on a farm adjoining Mr. Simmons'.

September 20th, 1853, the subject of our sketch was united in marriage to A. B. Cook. They went to keeping house on the farm where they have since resided. Although her first home was built of logs rough and simple she was to all appearance as happy as the bride of today with her elegant home.

Four daughters were born to them. One passed away in infancy. The surviving daughters are Mrs. Jerome Dills, Mrs. D. S. Pike of DeWitt, Mrs. Ida Randall who resided with her parents, two granddaughters, Mrs. George Pike of Olive, Mrs. Marc Cutlar of Lansing. Four great-grandchildren besides the daughters and husband are left to mourn the loss of a loving and devoted wife, mother and friend. She is the last of her father's family.

At the time of her death she had the distinction of having lived longer in Riley than any other person. Not the oldest person, but the oldest continuous resident.

What marvelous changes she had seen. Their first wheat was cut with a sickle threshed out by oxen treading out the kernels. She had seen the ox cart give way to the steam and electric car, automobiles, etc. She had lived a long and useful life, loved and respected by all who knew her.

She was quiet and unassuming. With her, once a friend, always a friend.

She was a charter member of South Riley Grange, a member of the Clinton County Pioneer Society. Although a member of no church her faith was strong in universal salvation. She believed that some where, some how and some time the whole human family would be restored to perfect holiness and happiness.

We weep and sympathize with these mourning friends but we can not comfort them. Our words are as vanity. But there is One who knoweth all things and doeth all things well and can heal the broken hearts. We hope they will look above the clouds where the sun is shining and look forward to the glorious reunion of loved ones where no tears and heart aches ever come.

The funeral was held at her late home Monday afternoon, Rev. Mrs. O. J. C. Woodman of Paw Paw officiating. The attendance was very large. The casket was covered with beautiful flowers.

The choir sang the following selections: "Thy Will Be Done," "We Shall Meet Them By and Bye," "Asleep in Jesus." Choir: Mrs. Willis McLouth, Mrs. Carl VanFleet; organist, Mrs. Will Krass. Pall bearers:

From Olive Correspondent:

Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Cook, of Riley, were reminded last Sunday that 50 years had passed since they were wed, by several of their near relatives appearing at their home and spending the day with them. A bountiful dinner was served. An interesting program was given, in which appeared an original poem by Mrs. Estella Dilis. All report an enjoyable time and wish Mr. and Mrs. Cook may live to see many more anniversaries. Geo Simmons is the only witness living who attended this wedding. Mr. Cook has one sister living, Mrs. P. R. Freeman, of Orange Heights, Florida, who was also present.

Just fifty years ago today
The time not long I hear them say
That Amori B. Cook took for his bride
Amina L. Simmons, who sits by his side.
Fifty years ago. Fifty years ago.

With a resolute will and light of heart
Each one resolved to do his or her part
To build for themselves in the forest a home.
Where wild beasts and the red man did roam.
Fifty years ago. Fifty years ago.

They made a little clearing; built a log
house,
And lived as cozily as a little mouse
In their snug little quarters on the land
Not far from the place where their house
now stands.
Fifty years ago. Fifty years ago.

They have lived to see many a change.
They then cooked over the fire place. They
now use a range.
Then green stumps and tall majestic trees
Stood all around them nodding in the breeze.
Fifty years ago. Fifty years ago.

Not many years of time as it passes
Were they left alone but three little lasses
Came to gladden their home on earth
And fill it with shouts of laughter and
mirth.
Since fifty years ago. Fifty years ago.

When the three to womanhood had grown,
A bright little cherub came to the home.
She is now waiting on the other shore,
With outstretched arms to welcome them
o'er.
Since fifty years ago, fifty years ago.

Then two granddaughters to them were
given,
Which gave to their declining years a taste
of Heaven;
And now for the first time to increase their
joy,
Has been added to the circle a nice baby
boy.
Since fifty years ago, fifty years ago.

But through all the changes that have
passed and all that will come,
They still fondly cling to their pioneer
home;
She is their joy, and their pride, and no
other place below,
Can warm their hearts as she has done,
since fifty years ago,
Fifty years ago, fifty years ago.

Written by their loving daughter, ESTELLA.

Obituary.

Died, Thursday evening, April 6, at his home, after about three weeks sickness, Hiram A. Simmons, aged 35 years, of dropsy of the heart, caused by inflammatory rheumatism. The funeral was held Saturday, April 8th, at the Baptist church by the Rev. W. F. Dickerman, of the Universalist church, Lansing, and at the grave by the members of DeWitt lodge No. 272, F. & A. M., by request of the deceased brother. The funeral was one of the largest attended that ever took place in DeWitt, all the places of business being closed during the funeral services, which speaks plainly of the esteem in which the deceased was held by his fellow citizens.

Hiram A. Simmons was born June 16, 1857; was married to Miss Carrie Swift, of Washtenaw county, October 5, 1880; died April 6, 1893, after an illness of three weeks. He was a great sufferer from rheumatic trouble. Later on typhoid symptoms appeared, then heart troubles set in and ended his earthly pilgrimage. He was respected by all who knew him, was free from bad habits, and was looked upon as an exemplary citizen by all his acquaintances. He taught school winters and worked his farm summers for several years and has held various town offices. About six years ago his health failed him, so he had to give up farming. He moved to DeWitt, and for nearly four years has filled the office of postmaster. His intentions were to go back to the farm soon, but "man proposes, God disposes." He was a member of DeWitt lodge, No. 272, F. & A. M., and was secretary at the time of his death; also a member of the Eastern Star. He has been a member of the DeWitt choir for several years and was always ready to do his part on any and every occasion, and will be missed in this as in many other places. His religion consisted in doing by others as you would have them do.

Obituary

Carrie Swift was born in Plymouth, Wayne county, Mich., Dec. 27th, 1860. She resided there until her marriage to Hiram A. Simmons of Olive, Clinton county, Oct. 5th, 1880. They resided in Olive and Riley until 1889, when they moved to DeWitt where she has since resided. Two daughters here born to them, Mrs. Charles Webb and Mrs. Earl VanFleet, both of DeWitt. Mr. Simmons passed away in 1893. In November, 1901, she was united in marriage to T. W. Baldwin, who with the daughters and little granddaughter, one sister, Mrs. D. K. Shafer of Northville, survive her. She was a kind wife, mother, sister, friend and neighbor.

She was of a kind and loving disposition, willing to do all she could for the sick and suffering. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

She has been in poor health several years, but the final summons came very unexpectedly. She took her bed Saturday forenoon. She became unconscious at midnight and passed away without a struggle Monday noon, March 13th, 1911. The relatives and friends have the sympathy of all in their great sorrow.

She was a member of the O. E. S., the Clinton CO. Pioneer Society and was a firm believer in Universal Salvation. She believed that some time, somewhere, and somehow, all would be united in perfect peace and happiness.

It can be truly said of her her home was her kingdom, her aim in life was to make her loved ones happy.

-Poem-

The funeral was held at her late home Wednesday, under the auspices of the O. E. S., Rev. O. J. C. Woodman of Paw Paw officiating. Interment in DeWitt cemetery.

Simmons

Funeral Cards from the Scrapbook of C. Harry Moon

Now owned by Eleanor Moon McKinney (1984)

Celia C. Simmons- May 23, 1882 - July 31, 1951

Colonial Chapel Estes Leadley Funeral Home

Fri. Aug. 3, 1951 1:00 p.m. DeWitt Cemetery

Clare D. Harrington, Reader

Miss Clara W. Besch, Organist

DeWitt Chapter No. 30, O. E. S.

Pallbearers: Fred Tucker, Bert Taylor, Harold Sipley,

Harry Moon, Lyle Hepfer, Clarence Bauerle.

CLINTON COUNTY NEWS, ST JOHNS, MICHIGAN

October 17, 1974

Dedication pays tribute to Revolutionary War soldier

By Jan L. Baderstadt
County News Writer

EAGLE - After 132 years since the death of Joshua Simmons II, the Greater Lansing Historical Society paid tribute to this revolutionary war soldier by erecting a Historical Marker by his grave Saturday, Oct 5, at the North Eagle Cemetery. Simmons is the only known soldier of the American Revolution buried in this area.

The ceremony opened with the call of drums by M. Hamaker and company, as the First Foot Guards-- Grenadiers from Southfield, marched in.

The 6 members of the team were dressed in the uniform of

the 1764 British Foots Soldiers of the Right Flank, or Grenadiers. They opened the ceremony by performing drills of a British soldier of 1764, along with firing of muskets to salute Simmons.

After Geneva K. Wiskemann, president of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing welcomed the 200 people present, Congressman Garry Brown of the 3rd Congressional District in Michigan spoke about Simmons and emphasized Michigan's role in the upcoming Bi-Centennial.

Following Brown was the Lt Gov of Michigan, James H. Brickley. Brickley, who is chairman of the Michigan Bi-Centennial Commission

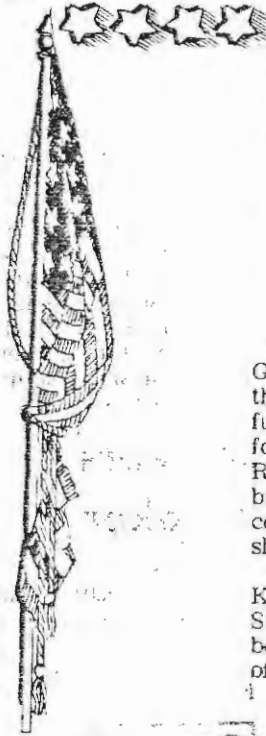
stressed Michigan's role in this celebration and how the Simmons dedication was just an introduction to all that's going to happen.

The historical marker was unveiled about 500 feet from his grave by Jerry D. Roe, a member of the Michigan Historical Commission and a trustee of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing. George Wiskemann along with Brown and Brickley assisted Roe in the dedication.

Simmons was born on a farm in Massachusetts on Aug 3, 1764. He joined the Continental Army in 1799 at the age of 14 to fight the British. He came to the Eagle area in the early 1800's and was buried on what is now the North Eagle Cemetery, 2 miles north of Grange Rd.



SIMMONS



Historical marker for Revolution

By Betty Jones

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing announced this week its plan to start a fund for a historical marker for Joshua Simmons II, a Revolutionary soldier who is buried in the North Eagle cemetery in Eagle Township, Clinton County.

According to Geneva Kebler Wiskemann, former State Archivist, an appeal is being made to the members of the Simmons family and to

area residents to underwrite the costs involved in the acquiring and placing of the marker.

Although no site has been established for the marker which will then be listed in the registry of the History division of the Michigan Department of State, Mrs. Wiskemann is meeting with the Eagle Township board in an attempt to select a permanent site for the marker.

Board members indicate they felt the site should be the cemetery near the grave but Mrs. Wiskemann hopes it would be placed in a more accessible to general public.

Joshua Simmons was a Continental soldier serving from Massachusetts in the War for American independence. Research on family reveals Joshua II born on Aug. 3, 1762 or



JOSHUA SIMMONS III, son of Rev. War veteran Joshua Simmons.



HANNAH MACOMBER SIMMONS, wife of Joshua.



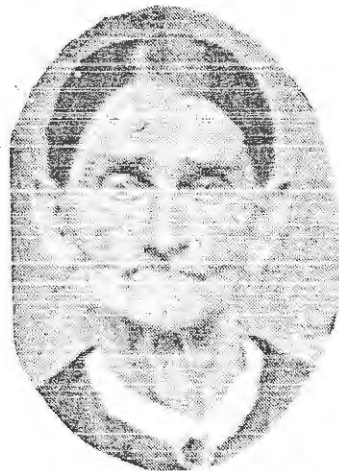
DAVID ANDRUS SIMMONS, son of Joshua Simmons.

ker planned ary War soldier

in Clinton County as early as 1835.

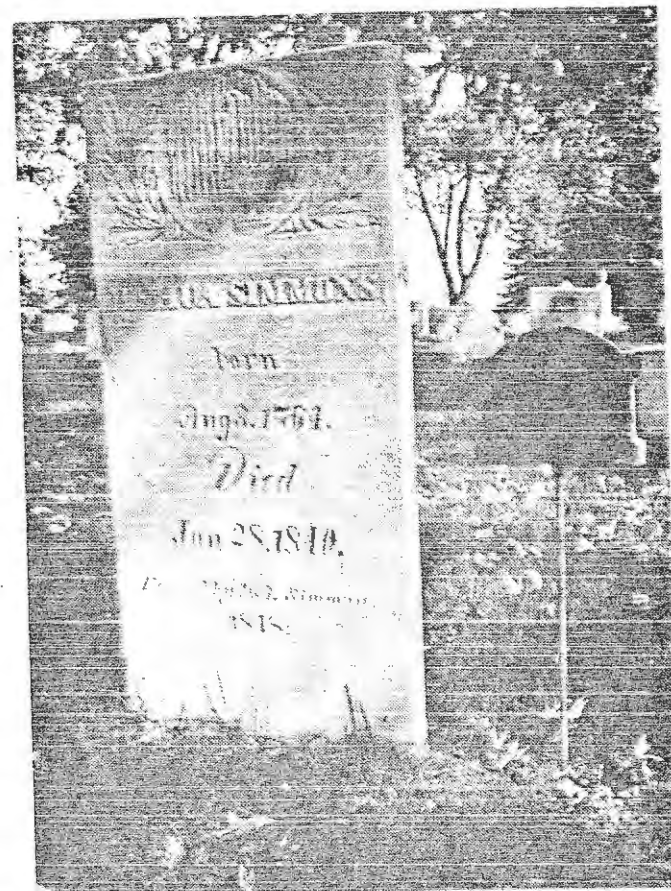
Joshua II, the soldier, spent his early years with David in the Clinton-Ionia area. It was David who donated the cemetery in section 9 of Eagle Township, where his father is said to have been the first burial in 1840.

In the early 1930's the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a small



LAVINA SIMMONS
MAKEPEACE HARD,
daughter of Joshua.

marker by the soldier's headstone. School children, members of patriotic organizations and people

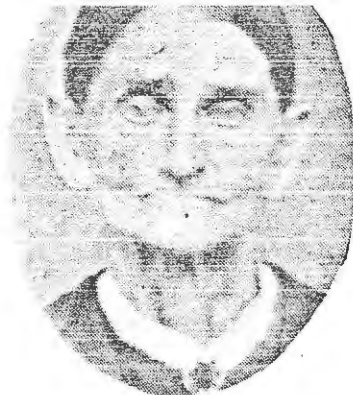


THE LONG SHADOWS OF A LATE AFTERNOON sun play on the headstone of Joshua Simmons, veteran of the Revolutionary War who is buried in North Eagle cemetery in Clinton County. The flag on the accompanying metal marker was a casualty of weather but the inscription tells it was placed by the Lansing chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

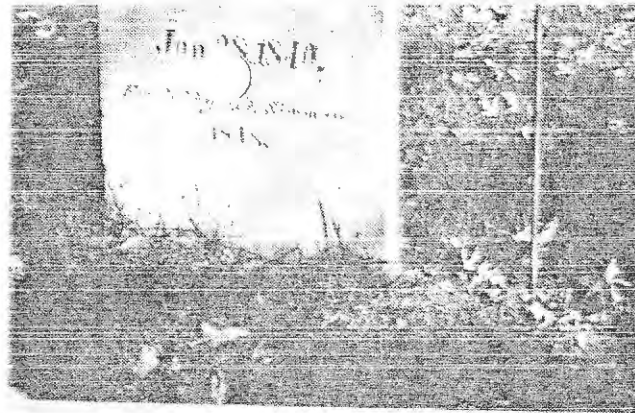
Simmons



ANDRUS SIM-
son of Joshua Sim-



LAVINA SIMMONS
MAKEPEACE HARD,
daughter of Joshua.



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in Dighton, Mass., descendant of a long line on New England farmers. His claim for pension proves he enlisted Nov. 1, 1778 in the Revolutionary War and served several three-month-long enlistments, through 1780. He moved from Dighton to Bristok, Ontario County, New York about 1801.

There the family was part of a large company who settled the "Dighton Purchase" of western New York. Ruth Andrews Simmons, his wife, died in 1806 leaving a family of six daughters and two sons. Some are obscure in the pages of eastern history, but others are known to have moved west.

The two sons, Joshua III and David Andrus pushed on with their father to Michigan, where Joshua III purchased land in Livonia Township of Wayne County, cleared the land for farming and built barns, homes and mills in Farmington and Plymouth.

David Andrus married Cyrena Emmons in 1828 and they eventually settled in Portland, Mich., where he operated a jewelry business. Records of land ownership show that David and Joshua (which Joshua we are not certain) were picking up 90 and 180 acre parcels of land

marker by the soldier's headstone. School children, members of patriotic organizations and people who traced their beginnings to this man came to note the occasion. The ceremony, described as "impressive" in local newspapers, was brief. Rural quiet once more dominated the evidence of history, and few residents of the area today know the story.

The historical society is collecting funds for the purchase of a metal marker to be approved and registered by the History division of the Michigan Department of State and hopes to be able to place it early this summer.

Donations for the fund are being accepted by Geneva Kebler Wiskemann and Jane I. Piatt of Eagle, president of the Historical Society of Greater Lansing.



Staff Photo by GINGER SHARP

Chris Thompson, 4, of East Lansing uses headstone to rest during ceremonies while redcoats try parade rest

Michigan Finally Honors Patriot — With Redcoats

By JOHN TEARE
Staff Writer

For these past 134 years, Joshua Simmons, Revolutionary war veteran, has rested peacefully in his grave in the township cemetery a few miles north of Egel.

Things were different Saturday morning, when history and six British redcoats, clanking sabers and belching smoke and occasional fire from their muskets, caught up with the one-time, teen-aged volunteer soldier from a farm somewhere in Massachusetts.

ABOUT 200 persons turned out for ceremonies dedicating a state historical marker proclaiming Simmon's grave as one of the few known Michigan resting places of soldiers of America's first war.

As military maneuvers go, it wasn't the sharpest drill in the history of the

manual of arms. One redcoat's bayonet flew off and almost skewered a bystander.

And as a graveside service, it was decidedly un-funeral, more something to do on the way to a football game, which many there were.

LITTLE KIDS sat solemnly on stool-high tombstones or rolled in the autumn leaves, along with one woman who fell flat on her face, tripped by a low slung slab while she tried for a better view.

There were speeches by a few dignitaries: Lt. Gov. James H. Brickley, chairman of the state bicentennial commission; U.S. Rep. Garry Brown, whose district includes the Eagle cemetery; and state Highway Commissioner Peter Fletcher, who knows all the big words so appropriate for such occasions.

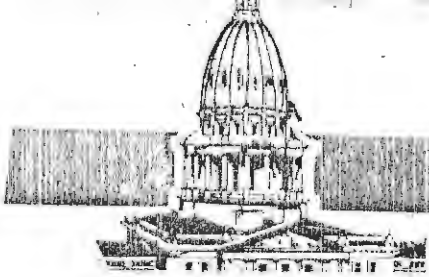
A few National Guard officers stood around looking embarrassed and chilly in their summer short-sleeved khakis.

BUT MOSTLY there were the British redcoats, re-creations actually, of the First Foot Guards — Grenadiers of Southeast Michigan, Norman Wilson of Woodhaven the sergeant in charge.

They were recruited for the occasion by Geneva K. Wiskemann, president of the Greater Lansing Historical Society, after no sons of the Continental Army could be mustered up.

No one can say, of course, how Joshua Simmons, 210 years old if he were alive today, felt about having the troops of George II march over the rise and down onto his position again.

NONE OF his descendants seemed to mind, and probably old Josh wouldn't have either, considering his enemy had no bullets. That was a lot better than when he signed on at age 14 for his first of 12 three-month-long enlistments.

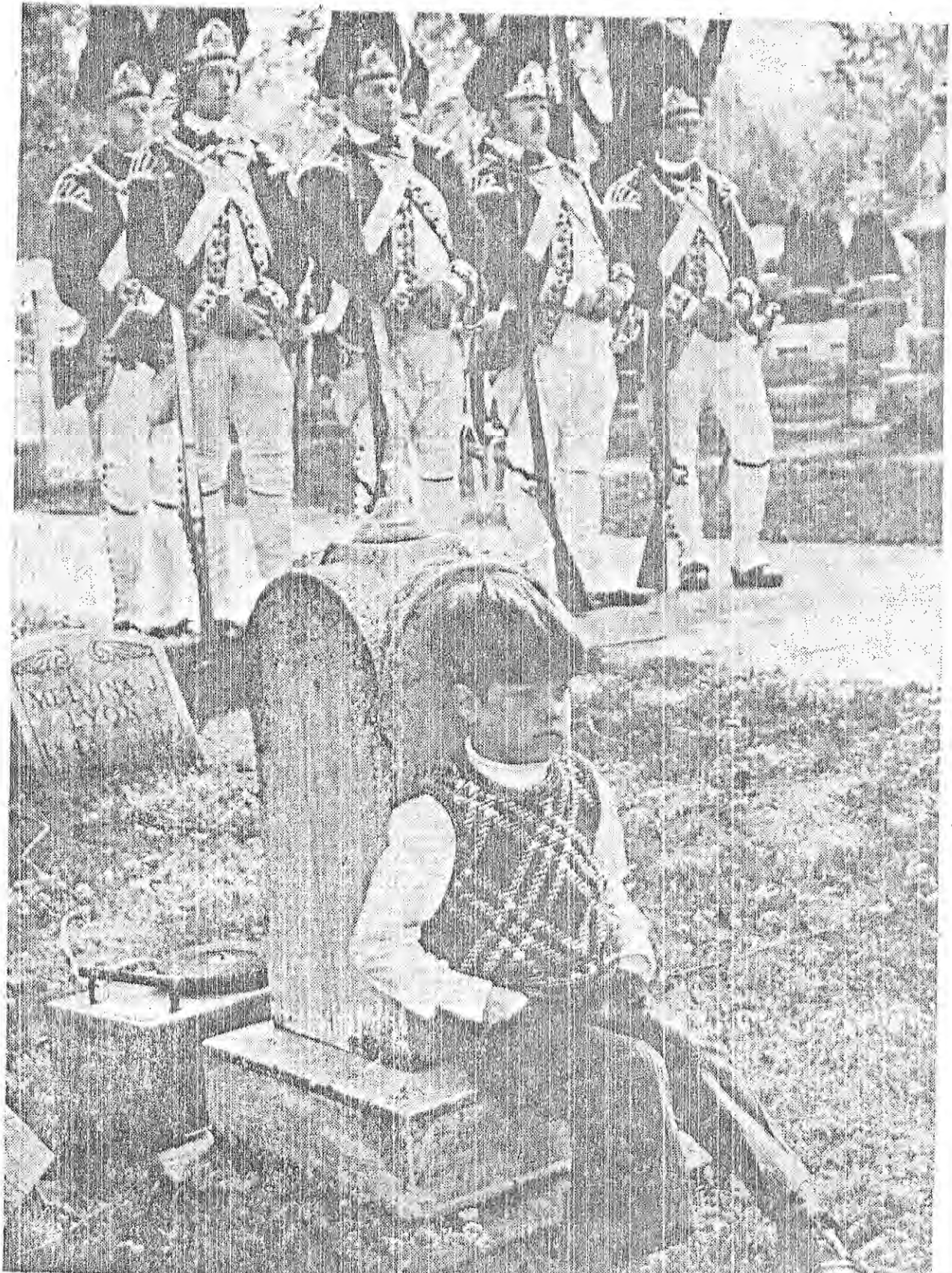


THE STATE

MICHIGAN'S COMPLE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1974, LANSING, MICHIGAN

Simmons





THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF GREATER LANSING

TOWN CRIER

Box 515, Lansing, MI 48903

VOLUME 16, NO. 3

FALL, 1974

and Bicentennial Forum

*Mid-Michigan
Plans For The
Bicentennial*

A Dedication

The bright fall flowers are gone, the flags rolled up, the shock of gunfire and drum beats which pleased the crowd are only a memory. Snow has transformed the words into bas relief; but the official State marker honoring Joshua Simmons II, Continental soldier in the American War for Independence, will remind each one who reads the text that the heritage we enjoy was given life by men who disagreed, struggled for their beliefs, and dared to leave comfort for a rough frontier.

The marker in honor of Joshua Simmons, only known soldier of the American Revolution buried in the Greater Lansing area, was dedicated Oct. 5 at the North Eagle Cemetery. The dedication was sponsored by the Historical Society of Greater Lansing.

On the program was the 1st Foot Guards—Grenadiers from the Detroit area, a regiment recreated according to the 1768 Clothing Warrant. The original battalion, composed of drafts from each of the three Guards regiments, was formed Feb. 13, 1776, and two months later left for America under Col. William Mather of the Coldstream Guards.

For the ceremony, the Foot Guards drilled to the 18th Century military muster. Their muskets were copies of the original Brown Bess long land and short land pattern, referred to today as the 1st and 2nd model Brown Bess.

Peter Fletcher, highway commissioner, was master of ceremonies. He spoke with volubility *nulli secundus* in the difficult verbal maneuvers of tongue twisting words with tongue in cheek.

Principal speaker for the dedication was James Brickley, lieutenant governor of Michigan and chairman of the State Bicentennial Commission. Others who spoke were Geneva Wiskemann, presi-



Lt. Gov. James Brickley at the unveiling of the marker honoring Joshua Simmons II. — photo by Jack Thompson

dent of the Society; Garry Brown, congressman; and Russell Howe, Eagle Township supervisor.

The ladies of the North Eagle Cemetery Society reported that they served over 200 wind-refreshed and hungry people who accepted the invitation of the Society to a country style lunch at the Eagle town hall following the dedication.

Several letters of thanks have been received from members of the Simmons family. Local newspapers reported the events of the day in detail to their readers.

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing has added a new membership category, a junior membership for those of high school age or younger. The cost of membership is one half that of the regular membership, or \$2.50.

Any young person interested in belonging to the Society may send their \$2.50 to The Historical Society of Greater Lansing, Box 515, Lansing, MI 48903.

Sleight

Funeral Cards from the Scrapbook of C. Harry Moon

Now owned by Eleanor Moon McKinney (1984)

Samuel Sleight, 1436 Lyons

March 1, 1859, Rochester, N.Y.

October 21, 1948, Ingham Co., Mi.

Gorsline - Runciman Funeral Home, Sun. Oct. 24, 1948 2:30

Rev. C. Harry Moon DeWitt Methodist Church

Reed Cemetery, Clinton Co., Mi.

Pallbearers: Glenn Sleight, Eddie Sleight, Donald
Sleight, Fred Schmidt, Robert Young, Rodney Young.

Smalley

Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Smalley moved Monday from Smalley corners on M-27 to their residence on North Market street and their son and family moved from the Floyd Parks residence on East Main street to Smalley corners for the winter.

Frank Smalley, who is building the 11 miles of road from Dewitt to Lansingburg, will have the last stretch of the road graded by Thursday, ready for graveling which will take several weeks to complete.

Smalley

Married, by Rev. Isiaah Wilson, pastor of the M. E. church of North Lansing, at the bride's home in DeWitt, on Sunday, February 14th, 1892. Mr. Charles Smalley, of Lansing, to Miss Carrie Terbush, of DeWitt. The bride was given by her mother, Mrs. Cornelia Terbush, at 8 o'clock, as the wedding march was played. The groom was given by his father, Mr. George Smiley, of Lansing. Then the groom took his bride and marched under a beautiful arch of white silk lace, facing the south window. The groom then claimed his bride to be his wedded wife through life with an elegant gold band ring. Then with the pastor in lead, the guests marched to a most beautifully laden table with refreshments and fruits of all kinds. The bride's cake was the most beautifully decorated ever seen at such an occasion, with a wreath of bride's roses, ribbons and green leaves. After refreshments were served many valuable presents were presented. We wish the happy pair silver and gold in plenty and good success, and that every day may be brighter as they journey through life together.

MERCURY.

2/18/1892

Smalley

The funeral of Mrs. Samantha Smalley of Olive was held at the Baptist church on Wednesday, December 18, and the interment in our cemetery beside her husband who died some since. Rev. H. B. Bard of Lansing officiating.

St. Johns News

12-26-1901

Smalley

Leone Smalley Of Dewitt, And John Brooks Married

Dewitt — Miss Leone Gertrude Smalley, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Smalley on North Market street in this village, was united in marriage Saturday, Jan. 18, 1930, to John Brooks of Lansing, at the parsonage of the Westminster Presbyterian church, the pastor, Rev. A. C. Buchanan officiating. They were attended by Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Brooks of St. Johns, brother of the groom. For the present they will reside with the groom's mother, Mrs. Brooks of Lansing.

Smith

who had been a resident of Olive and Riley during the last 36 years, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Maggie Coffman, near the Jason school house, in the last named township, on Saturday, June 6, 1903, of epilepsy, aged 76 years. The funeral was held from the residence of his daughter, Mrs. Coffman, at 10 o'clock last Tuesday morning. Rev. B. McDermid officiating. Osgood & Osgood, of St. Johns, undertakers. Besides this daughter he leaves a widow and four sons, Byron S., of Grand Ledge; Melville D., of Gaylord; Merville D., of Riley, and Fayette, of Watertown, all of whom were present at the funeral. They are a very genial family, and the father goes down to his grave honored and respected.

MRS. MIRANDA SMITH

DIED LAST THURSDAY AT HER HOME IN RILEY.

Mrs. Miranda Smith died June 6 at the home of her daughter in Riley, death being due to the infirmities of old age. Miranda Rogers was born in New York September 6, 1827. When six years old she went with her parents to North Fairfield, O., and at the age of 22 she was married to Oel T. Smith. They came to Michigan in 1867. Four sons and one daughter survive her, B. S. Smith of Grand Ledge, Melville of Riley, Melville of Oshtemo, Fayette of Watertown and Maggie Coffman of Riley. She was a kind and indulgent wife and mother, a good neighbor and a true friend whose memory will long be cherished. Though her sight has been impaired for twelve years, she bore her affliction with great patience. She passed away just four years from the day of her husband's death, and a dearly beloved cousin of Battle Creek, whose birthday, the same as her own, they often celebrated together, died just 24 hours before her. Both had been consistent members of the Baptist church since early youth.

Golden Wedding.

Children and grand children met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Oel L. Smith in Olive March 9, to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Their children who are living were present, except one, a son, who lives at Gaylord, Mich. We regret that this brother and son could not also have been present on this one occasion which so seldom comes to a couple. A cousin also of the bride was present, Mrs. B. D. Rathburn, of Riley. The bride and groom received several appropriate gifts. The day was enjoyed by all and will long be remembered. Maranda Rogers and Oel Smith were married in Fairfield Huron county, Ohio, March 9, 1848, and came to Michigan in April 1866, lived one year in Gratiot county coming from there to Clinton county, where they have since resided.

ONE WHO WAS THERE.

People's Ticket Elected.

The entire People's ticket was elected, which means saloons for Ovid, so it is reported, the coming year. President, F. A. Marshall; recorder, F. S. Green; treasurer C. H. Misner; assessor, John Link; trustees, G. F. Gleason, Robert Hyslop and Wm. Stevenson.

Card of Thanks.

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to the friends and neighbors who so kindly assisted us during the sickness and death of our darling, also for the floral offerings.
MR. AND MRS. F. L. HOTCHKISS.

The quarterly conference of the M. E. church will meet in the library rooms of the church Friday evening at 7:30 o'clock.

St. Johns News MAR. 17, 1898

Fifty years ago—on July 3, 1880—Mr. and Mrs. Edward Smith, well known and highly esteemed Victor township couple, spoke their marriage vows at the Presbyterian church in North Lansing. Last Thursday, July 3, 1930, they celebrated their golden wedding day amidst more than 50 friends and relatives at their farm home near the Grove church where they have resided since 1909. Among the six people who attended their marriage two are still living, Aaron Black of Albion, and Mrs. Mary Beurerle of Dewitt, both of whom were present at the anniversary.

Mr. Smith is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Smith of Olive, and his mother, who is 88 years old, still lives there. Mrs. Smith's parents were Mr. and Mrs. Martin Leffler, also of Olive.

Two years after their marriage a half century ago they moved to Roscommon and cleared 40 acres of hardwood timber. They made their home in the north nine years and then returned to Clinton county. Twenty-one years ago they purchased the Brunson farm by the Grove church where they have since resided. They are the parents of two children, Eddie and Clair Smith, and have two grand-

(Continued on page 7, column 4)

Chas. Co Rep. News

7-10-1930

Smith

Funeral Cards from the Scrapbook of C. Harry Moon

Now owned by Eleanor Moon McKinney (1984)

Mary J. Smith-

Aug. 11, 1862 - April 10, 1948

At the Residence, Tues., April 13, 1948 2:00 p.m.

Rev. C. Harry Moon Wilsey Cemetery

Pallbearers: Frank Leffler, Frank Scholes, Delmar
Leffler, Glenn Smith, Carl Scholes, Max Smith.

Smith

Verion G. Smith

Verion G. (Gene) Smith, 60, of DeWitt, died on March 24, 1989, in Lansing.

Mr. Smith was born on March 17, 1929, in Aurora, Ill. He was a lifelong resident of DeWitt. He was a member of the First Baptist Church of DeWitt for eight years, and a member of the Edwin J. Leyanne VFW Post No. 671 of DeWitt for the past nine years.

He is survived by his wife, Lottie; two daughters, Mrs. Thomas (Vicki) Jacobs of Lansing and Mark (Julie) Holton Sr. of Grand Ledge; one son, Donald (Denice) Smith of Dansville; nine grandchildren; his mother, Augusta Smith of Lansing; three brothers, Warren Smith of Lansing, Robert Smith of Traverse City, and James Smith of Texas.

He was preceded in death by his father, Verion J. Smith.

Services were March 28 at Gorsline-Runciman DeWitt Chapel with the Rev. Darrell Hodge, pastor of First Baptist Church of DeWitt officiating. Interment was in DeWitt Cemetery.

Military graveside services were provided by the Honor Guard of the Edwin L. Leyanne VFW Post No. 671.

Smith

Funeral Cards from the Scrapbook of C. Harry Moon

Now owned by Eleanor Moon McKinney (1984)

W. Burr Smith- Nov. 2, 1874 - Feb. 16, 1946

Gunnisonville Church, Mon. Feb. 18, 2:00 p.m.

Rev. George Card & Rev. Harry Moon

Gunnisonville Cemetery

Pallbearers: Walter Geisenhaver, Allen Cable, Will
Seeger, LaVern Hart, Howard Cushman, George Hall.

Prominent Young Couple Wed at St. Mary's Parish Home Saturday



Mr. and Mrs. Bernard V. Smith.

The wedding of Miss Laura Williams and Bernard V. Smith was solemnized Saturday morning at St. Mary's parish home, Rev. Father Heenan officiating. Miss Florence Carrier, aunt of the bride, was her only attendant while Bernard Harlbin, son of Mr. Harlbin, a cousin of the groom, was the best man. The bride wore a suit of navy blue tulle and a large picture hat. She carried a bouquet of white and pink sweet peas tied with tulle. Miss Carrier was dressed in blue crepe de chine and a large hat and carried a bouquet of daisies and other spring flowers. Following the ceremony a small reception was held at the home of the bride's aunt, Mrs. M. R. Carrier, and a wedding breakfast was served to about 30 guests. At the conclusion the bride was gowned in

a lovely frock of gray canton crepe trimmed with touches of burnt orange.

Immediately after the breakfast Mr. and Mrs. Smith left for a short wedding trip. They will be at home after May 10, at 1017 Eureka st. Both are graduates of Lansing high school and for the past four years have been employees of the Michigan Employers Casualty company of which Mr. Smith is assistant secretary. He is also secretary of the Wolverine Insurance company.

The bride has been honored with many pleasant pre-nuptial affairs, among them a miscellaneous shower on Thursday evening given by Mrs. Floy Williams. The rooms were prettily decorated in yellow and white daffodils being used, and the same color scheme was carried out in the supper menu.

Elden Smith: He's a busy administrator in growing DeWitt

By BOB CALVERLEY
News Staff Writer

Elden T. Smith has lived in DeWitt for 12 years.

And in that time he has been

a council member, mayor, county supervisor, police chief, city administrator, assessor, building inspector and street commissioner.

In that 12 years DeWitt has

been incorporated into a city, annexed the Lake Geneva subdivision, and has become the fastest growing area of Clinton County.

"There are six apartment buildings planned, with one under construction, as well as the Millbrook Meadows development," says Smith.

Millbrook Meadows consists of 180 acres divided into 350 lots. The first homes are already under construction.

Smith first became involved with DeWitt when he was an original member of the charter committee in 1965. When DeWitt became incorporated as a city he was elected a member of the city council.

In November of 1966 he became mayor of DeWitt and at the same time he served as a Clinton County Supervisor.

"I resigned as mayor to become administrative director in January of 1969," said Smith. He explained that administrative duties had grown even faster than the city, and that this was

typical of every city in the country.

Not only was Smith administrative director, but he also performed the duties of police chief, and later as assessor.

This year DeWitt hired a full-time police chief to allow Smith time for burgeoning administrative duties.

"It's worked out pretty good now," said Smith, "I go to work about 7:30 in the morning, quit at five, and I'm not on call all night."

Being an administrative director in a small city involves more than the usual administra-

tive duties of supervising the police chief, sewage plant operator and other city employees.

There isn't enough work to hire many full-time employees, but there are a variety of jobs to be done. As administrative director Smith finds himself operating city equipment, inspecting new buildings, or filling in as police chief again when the regular chief has a day off.

"Sometimes you take a lot of abuse working here," says Smith, "you have to have a liking to work with people. There's a lot of satisfaction in it."



Elden Smith, administrative director

Smith

DeWitt Carrier Retires

Smith

Mailman's Long Road Ends

By GENE HASHLEY
State Journal Staff Writer

DEWITT—For 25 years, Stanley Smith has been delivering mail to patrons on R. 1, DeWitt.

Today there is a new face on the mail route because Smith, 70, has retired.

Smith, who doesn't look or act a day over 50, did not retire because he wanted to. Mandatory retirement is age 70 for postal employees having a certain number of years of service.

He began carrying the DeWitt route in 1945, after he transferred from the Lansing Post Office. Smith worked as a substitute on R. 4, Lansing and R. 2, Lansing.

★ ★ ★

He was appointed rural carrier in 1943, by the postmasters and rural appointment division in Washington, D.C.

"He was a very dedicated employee and when he retired he turned back 276 days of unused sick leave, which means quite a savings to the Post Office Department," Arthur Newman, postmaster said.

Smith's route was 57 miles long back in 1955, then grew to 93 miles shortly after. Two years ago the route was split and now is 60 miles long.

"Modern roads and transportation have made the job easier over the years," Smith said.

"We managed to get most of the mail through most of the time," he said.

The Jan. 27, 1967 snowfall held up the mail for two days, and on the third day Smith said he could

only deliver mail on the main roads.

and tribulations, but you've just got to take the bitter with the sweet," Smith said.



Stanley Smith Makes Last Mail Stop

A few years ago Smith said spring mud used to be a big problem, but it isn't too much of a problem any more.

Since 1948 Smith has purchased a new car every year and put between 30,000 and 35,000 miles on it.

When asked what he was going to do now that he has retired, Smith said, "I'm not going to make any plans until after deer season."

A retirement reception is being held tonight at the DeWitt Dairy Bar at 8:30 p.m.

1964

Smith



Mr. and Mrs. Carleton F. Smith of DeWitt announce the engagement of their daughter, Kathleen Louise Smith, to William Robert Pederson. The prospective bridegroom, now serving with the U.S. Navy, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sherman L. Pederson of 14352 Myers Road. July 11 is the selected wedding date.