

Rush County Genealogical Society

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Rush County Families

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- *Vice-President:*
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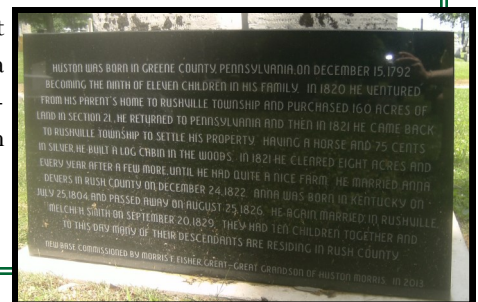
As we continue to explore the pictures on the “Old Settlers” composite pictures at the Historical Society Museum, it was found that Mr. and Mrs. Huston Morris have been distinctly honored by one of their descendants. A simple search on the internet revealed not only a short biography but also their photographs. In 2013,

Morris F. Fisher, great-great grandson of Huston and Melchi Morris, commissioned a large headstone to be placed at the gravesites of his grandparents. One side is etched with their likeness and the other side reads:

“Huston was born in Greene County, Pennsylvania, on December 15, 1792, becoming the ninth of eleven children in his family. In 1820 he ventured from his parent’s home to Rushville Township and purchased 160 acres of land in Section 21. He returned to Pennsylvania and then in 1821 he came back to Rushville Township to settle his property. Having a horse and 75 cents in silver, he built a log cabin in the woods. In 1821 he cleared eight acres and every year after a few more until he had quite a nice farm. He married Anna Devers in Rush County on December 24, 1822. Anna was born in Kentucky on July 25, 1804, and passed away on August 25, 1826. He again married in Rushville Melchi H. Smith on September 20, 1829. They had ten children together and to this day many of their descendants are residing in Rush County.”

Another search for information about Huston Morris revealed that he was a lifelong Baptist and member of the Pleasant Run Baptist Church. Being also a staunch Republican, in August 1863 he submitted three resolutions to the Church’s leadership in support of the war effort. These resolutions equated failure to pray for governmental authorities with treason and exhorted church members to refrain from any behavior that might be construed as sympathetic to the rebellion.

Melchi Smith Morris passed away on August 17, 1879, at the age of 74. Huston lived just a few short months longer passing away on December 16, 1879, aged 87 years and 1 day. They both rest at East Hill Cemetery in Rushville.



Monument of Huston and Melchi Morris, East Hill Cemetery

Buildings and Businesses

Across America, going to the movies became a popular form of entertainment in the 1910s and 1920s. And as the movie industry grew in popularity, it was possible for a small community to support more than one local theater. Such was the case for Rushville. Many of the older residents interviewed by the Junior Historical Society during the 1970s recalled going to the “Nickelodeon” as a popular pastime of their youth. The price of admission being only a nickel, they took advantage of the affordability and frequently found themselves heading to the movies on a Saturday night.

For many of today’s Rush County residents, there has only been one theater, and that closed more than 20 years ago: The Princess Theater, located in the 300 block of Main Street. But old newspapers and city directories reveal up to four theaters once operated at one time or another, all within three blocks of each other. The April 7, 1911, edition of the Daily Republican lists advertisements for four theaters: The Palace, The Star Grand, The Portola and The Vaudet.

The Gem Theater operated on West Second Street in 1914 and by 1923, the Mystic Theater was operating at 303 N. Main Street. In 1924 the City Directory lists the Castle Theater located at 109 E. Third Street. When the Princess Theater came into being is uncertain but it outlasted all the others, being in continuous operation until the early 1990s.

Today there is a growing movement not only in Rushville but in other small towns to restore these small local theaters. One similarity these small towns seem to have is that residents share fond memories of going to the movies in the “old movie theater.”



The Gem Theatre was located on the south side of West Second Street between Main and Morgan streets.



The Palace theater was located on the south side of East Third Street.



From Our Officers

You might be wondering how we are coming along with two of our on-going projects, so to catch you up . . .

Between rain showers this summer, we continue to visit cemeteries throughout the county. Our focus at the present time is to make sure all the graves listed on the website [findagrave](#) have an accompanying picture. If you are looking for a way to lend a hand with this project, visit [findagrave](#) to determine which cemetery you would like to visit and which graves are in need of a picture. Downloading your pictures can easily be accomplished by following [findagrave](#)'s instructions (see "How to Add a Photo" under [findagrave](#) FAQs).

We are also making progress in organizing our collection of obituaries so they can be easily accessed and retrieved should anybody wish to obtain a copy. It is slow-going as

we find out just how many obituary clippings we do have. But progress is being made!

Some other news you might find interesting:

RCGS has learned the DNR presented representatives of East Hill Cemetery with a plaque at the Indiana State Fair in recognition of its placement on the National Historic Register. The process was long and required much patience, but the resulting recognition made it worthwhile. It is also satisfying to all that one of Rush County's treasured spots is recognized as such by others. Congratulations, East Hill!

And Donna Tauber has passed along there will be a Statewide Cemetery Commission Meeting hosted by Jeannie Regan-Dinius of the DNR Historic Preservation and Archeology Division. The meeting will provide updates on new cemetery legislation and also funding issues that face our historic landmarks in our Pioneer cemeteries.

The meeting will be held on Saturday September 19 from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Henry County New Castle Public Library, 376 South 15th Street in New Castle.

Meeting Notes

We wish to extend many, many Thank You's to Katrina Cole Cooper for her efforts in coordinating our visit to The Beech Church on August 22. Doug Jones (a descendant of the Archey family) and Brian Jeffries (a descendant of Macklin Jeffries) spoke about the history of the settlement, the Church and their families' personal history. Our members and visitors who were able to attend learned a great deal about some of Rush County's earliest pioneers. We also came away with a better appreciation of all the work that needs to be done in order to preserve the Church building for generations to come. Thank you, Doug and Brian for your graciousness in sharing your history and to Katrina for bringing us together.

RCGS's historian, Kevin Harr, has offered to share some his vast collection of pictures at our November meeting. Many have viewed Kevin's collection on his facebook page and will undoubtedly enjoy taking another look and for those who have yet to see his collection, this program promises to be an interesting look back in time.

We hope you will plan to join us!

As we look ahead and plan programs for 2016, we hope you will let us know what you enjoyed and what kinds of programs you would like to see planned.

From the Daily Republican, April 7, 1914:

History of Jabez Smith

Jabez Smith was born August 5, 1839 on a farm in Decatur county Indiana. He is the son of Lewis H. Smith and Mahala Dunn Smith. On the 22nd day of October, 1861 he enlisted at Rushville in Company F, 52 Indiana Infantry and served during the Civil War as a private, having been in some of the most important battles of the war. He was in the engagements at Fort Donaldson and Fort Henry in Kentucky; Durhamville and Franklin, Tenn; Capalo, Mississippi; Franklin, Missouri, and was with General Rosencrantz in the long road through Missouri after General Price, in 1864. Upon return from that raid he was in the battles of Nashville, Tennessee and Fort Blakely, Alabama, which last named battle was fought April 9, 1865, on the same day that Lee surrendered at Appomattox.

He was mustered out on September 9, 1865, at Montgomery, Ala., and arrived home September 23, 1865.

On October 12, 1865, he was married to Mary Hamilton at Brookville, Indiana, by the Rev. Mr. Berry, a Methodist minister and went to house keeping on the farm in Richland township, Rush County, then owned by B. L. Conner, and now owned by his widow, Mary J. Conner. He fared this place for sixteen years. He then moved to the Barnes farm in Noble township, where he stayed eight years; then to the John Hildreth farm southeast of Rushville, now owned by John K. Stiers, where he stayed seven years, then to the Robert F. Bebout farm west of Rushville, where he lived two years which place he left to become janitor of the new court house of Rush county, January 1, 1898. He has filled this position until the present time and expects to be mustered out May 1, 1914.

From the above statement it will be seen that during the past forty-nine years Mr. Smith has had six employers and has given entire satisfaction to each of them.

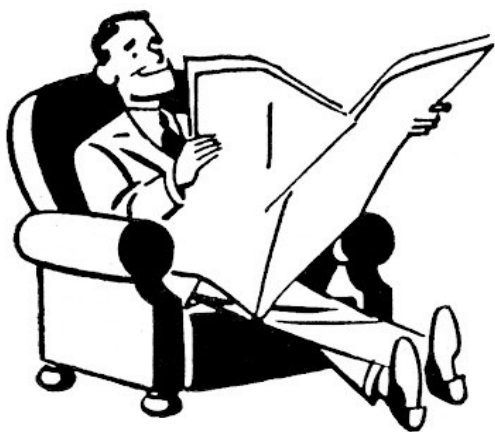
This record has been equaled by very few men and perhaps excelled by none. As a soldier he obeyed orders and took part in many important engagements doing the duty of a private faithfully and honestly. As a farm hand and tenant the time he stayed on the various places is proof of the satisfaction he gave in that capacity.

But it is as janitor of the court house that Jabez Smith endeared himself to people of Rush County. Perhaps more people of the county are acquainted with him because of his position here, than with any other citizen of the county. He was the same man with the poorest child that he was with the banker-always pleasant and willing to go to any pains to accommodate them. As the court house was new when he took charge of it, it was his duty and he considered it a pleasure to show the people of the county over the building and no one has heard him complain of being too tired or too busy to perform this duty.

Mr. Smith also became interested in county history and during the last fifteen years he has made a valuable collection of portraits of famous citizens of Rush county, as well as those of the state and nation which he has framed at his own expense and hung on the walls of his "gallery." He has also a collection of curios and relics, which it would be well for the county to preserve and extend in order that the coming generation may have an opportunity to see some of the household utensils and farming implements that were used in the past age.

We doubt if Mr. Smith has an enemy in the world and in leaving this position, which he has filled so creditably, he carries with him the very best wishes of all the people of his acquaintance. Perhaps the best that can be said of him is that he has been a man always and everywhere.

A. L. Gary



Brick Wall Tips

And from the May 4, 1900 edition of *The Daily Republican*:

Miss Amanda Looney left yesterday for Knobnoster, Mo., to visit her aunt. She will be absent for one month.

J. G. Boys and wife have moved back from Anderson, and for the present will occupy part of Mrs. W. W. Innis' house on North Morgan street.

H. E. Wells and family left yesterday for their home at Frankfort. They take with them the best wishes of many warm friends in Rushville for their success.

Thomas J. Geraghty and Miss Ethel, daughter of Chas. Dale, were married last Wednesday night by Rev. T. X. Logan, pastor of the Catholic church. The groom, who is a son of James Geraghty, Sr., is about twenty years old, and the bride sixteen or seventeen. The marriage license was issued at Jeffersonville, and Bishop O'Donoghue, of Indianapolis, granted a dispensation for the performance of the ceremony, the bride being a Protestant.

The charge of intent against Frank Norris for cutting John Cavitt, Jr, last winter was nollied in court this morning. Norris plead guilty to assault and battery and judgment was suspended by the court pending his good behavior.

The Morristown Sun says that Mrs. V. E. Lewark and son had a narrow escape from a runaway accident last Sunday.

Donuous Vandike, formerly of Noble township, died in Greenwood. He was an uncle of Mrs. John Dewester of Union township and she went to attend the funeral last Wednesday. He was about 60 years old.

John Ansberry, the flagman at the Lake Erie Railway crossing, has forwarded a ticket for ocean passage to his daughter in Balla, County Mayo, Ireland. When the family came to the United States, this daughter, then a little girl three years old, remained behind, and Mr. Ansberry has not seen her for sixteen years.

Look for your obituary and legal notice and then, take a minute to read other parts of the newspaper, too. You never know what insights might be revealed.

Many family researchers search old newspapers in search of an obituary, which is a good thing to do. Often an estate publishes legal notices; searching for deaths in the "Legal Notices" section of a newspaper is also a good thing to do. But there may be other clues about your ancestor's history that can be found by simply reading the 'gossip column' in a newspaper. The following is an excerpt from the July 11, 1889 edition of the *Rushville Republican* column titled "Local Brevities":

Wm. M. Souder has been granted a pension.

Connersville Examiner: Born, July 9, 1889, to Herman Munk and wife, a great big, fine looking boy baby.

Joseph McBride, of Centre, had a leg broken by a fall from a hay wagon.

Muncie Times: Joe Johnson, a horse dealer of Rushville, was in the city Wednesday.

H. P. McGuire, of the Rushville National Bank, has been on the half-sick list for several days.

Married, on Sabbath night, by Rev. W. H. Sands, at his residence, Andrew Krammus and Miss Ida Edmondson, both of this township.

Mr. Covall, of Indianapolis, E. B. Poundstone's new carriage blacksmith, has moved into Dr. Spurrier's house, next to the Christian church.

Wm. Trussler's child, aged about five months, died at three o'clock on the morning of the 4th inst., of spinal fever. It was a bright and promising little girl.

**RUSH COUNTY
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

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Our Mission:

*To bring together those interested in the
history and genealogy
of Rush County*



June Reader's Challenge:

While the identity of this school will remain a mystery for now, The Historical Society continues to thank us for our help.