

Clintonville History

May 2020

The Piatts

In-Laws of Poet Sarah Morgan Bryan

John Bear Piatt was born in New York in 1805. He was the son of John James Piatt and Rachel Bear. He was a pioneer who, during his lifetime, travelled throughout the United States. In September of 1829, he married Emily Scott, the daughter of John Scott and Catherine Grey. Emily's mother, Catherine, died in Ross County, Ohio in 1816. Her brother, Charles, lived in Columbus, OH and was involved in the Ohio State Journal. Her father, John, died in 1832 in Columbus, OH and is buried in Green Lawn Cemetery. John and Emily Piatt lived in Indiana for a number of years. They moved to Ohio, maybe to be closer to Emily's brother and father. The Biographical and Critical Study of John James and Sarah Morgan (Bryan) Piatt by Jean Allen Hanawalt, written in 1981, indicates that the family moved to Columbus in 1845. We know that John Bear Piatt worked the Doderidge Road grist mill previously owned by the Beers Family. The 1850 census lists them in Clinton Township, Franklin County, Ohio. The couple's daughter, Catherine Grey Piatt, married Joseph Wilson Smith in Clinton township, in 1851. The couple's youngest son, Guy, was born in Clinton Township,

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The Smiths

In-laws of Catherine Grey Piatt Smith-sister of John James Piatt and sister in law of Sarah Morgan Bryan

John Smith was born in New Hampshire in 1787. He came to Ohio, with his brother David, in 1812. David Smith, a lawyer, established The Ohio Monitor, a Republican newspaper, in Columbus, OH in 1816. John Smith was employed by Samuel Wilson, a miller. In 1813, John married Samuel Wilson's daughter Laura Olive. In 1814, John Smith purchased farm land from Thomas Bull, an early settler of the Clintonville area. Olive and John had six children: Samuel Davies Smith, Elizabeth Breck, Jeremiah Smith, Joseph Wilson Smith, John Jr. and Mary Starr. John Smith was a Deacon in the Presbyterian Church from 1818-1840. At this point, he became involved in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Brother David was a founding member of the Town Street Church in downtown Columbus and son Joseph was a founding member of the Clinton Chapel. John Smith is very involved in abolitionary and temperance activities. In fact, he founded both the Franklin County Anti-Slavery Society and the Franklin County Temperance Society. His sister in law, Jane, was married to Ozem Gardner, a known conductor on the Underground Railroad. His son Samuel Davies is a 1843 graduate of Oberlin College who becomes a noted reverend. At age 71, John Smith spends several years in Berea, KY with John Fee, attempting to establish an institute of higher learning-now known as Berea College. In 1859, he and his wife fled from Kentucky to Cincinnati following the John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. They waited to see if the Governor of Kentucky would allow them to re-enter the state. When it became clear that word would not come, they returned to Clintonville. During the Zoom presentation, you will hear the contents of letters written by the Smiths and Piatts. These letters tell of "Clintonville" as they knew it.

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Franklin County, OH in 1853. The Piatts made their home here for a decade or so. Their son William Pinkney Piatt died in Clinton township, Franklin County, OH in 1860. He was buried at Clinton Chapel. In 1861, Emily and John's son John James Piatt married Sarah Morgan, the subject of May Zoom meeting.

Wilson? Wilton? William?

Catherine Grey Piatt and Joseph Wilson Smith were married in 1851. The middle name "Wilson" was Joseph's mother's maiden name. According to the 1904 "Old Northwest" Genealogical Society publication, the headstone that was at the old M.E. cemetery (aka Clinton Chapel) read Joseph Wilson Smith. That said, son Joseph's middle name is a question. His middle name has been represented as Milton, Wilton and William. He is buried in Union Cemetery. The middle initial on the headstone reads "W". That would seemingly eliminate Milton. We have family stories that refer to Joseph as "Will" or "William" assumedly to distinguish him from his father Joseph. Joseph married the girl next door-Ella Hunt. They had a son Roy Ripley Smith. Roy's birth record shows his father's middle name as "Wilton". We may never have a solid answer.

The Postman:

Joseph W. Smith, son of Joseph Wilson and Catherine Grey (Piatt) Smith, served as the postmaster of the North Broadway station. The North Broadway Post office was located at the end of North Broadway (ie. The railroad tracks to the east of what is Interstate 71 today). His residence was listed as 831 Oakland Park Ave.

The Brickmaker:

Joseph Wilson Smith's Last Will and Testament reflected a partnership with Charles Moon. Charles and Alfred Moon came to Ohio from Marsden England in the 1850s. They owned a brickyard to the east of the railroad. Charles married Susana Ferguson. Miss Ferguson was the daughter of Joseph Ferguson, Clintonville's first postmaster. Susana served as a Clintonville postmaster for a number of years. At the time of her service, her home was on Orchard near

High Street. According to Elmer Pegg, Charles lost his life in a collapse of a sandbar in 1893. That sandbar was located at the northwest corner of Orchard and High Street. The Moons may have been making brick for the paving of High Street or North Broadway.

The Teachers

Joseph Wilson and Catherine Grey Smith's granddaughters, Kate and Edna, both taught at Clinton School (North Broadway and Clinton Heights Ave.) in the late 1890s.

The Railroad Man

Charles Piatt Smith, son of Joseph Wilson and Catherine Grey Piatt Smith became an surveyor and civil engineer. He worked for the Great Northern Railway Company. He inherited his grandfather's travelling spirit-moving to Utah, Oregon and Montana.

Mary and Luther Starr

In 1831, John Smith and Olive Wilson had a daughter they named Mary. Mary is Joseph Wilson's youngest sister. In 1849, at age 18, she married William Luther Starr, age 37. According to research done by Nancy Pendleton, shortly after their marriage, the Starrs moved to New York. Luther pledged his wife's Ohio land holdings on a business note. That note was called and the Starrs lost everything. The 1860 census lists them back in Clintonville, living with Mary's parents. They would have been Joseph and Catherine's neighbors. The Starr's move to Nebraska. They die within two years of each other. It should be noted that James Chestnut purchases 20 acres of Mary's property from a New York investor. He built the white brick house that sits on the east side of High south of Brighton (behind Longview Barbershop).

Zoom

Zoom can be a challenge. Your screen may freeze. It may have other oddities and messages. Just hang in there. These things will correct themselves! Just try to relax and have fun!

Where did Joseph Wilson and Catherine Grey Smith live?

Based on a detailed review of property records, I believe this may be Joseph Wilson and Catherine Grey Smith's home



This home was featured in a 1900's publication called Handsome Homes of Columbus. The photo describes a brick house sitting on the east side of High Street to the south of North Broadway. The photo is labelled "Residence of James Cochran". Mr. Cochran lived in Bexley, Oh. When Joseph Wilson Smith died in 1868, this particular property was transferred to Charles Piatt Smith. He moved with his mother and other family members to Montana in 1889. At that time, Herman Dennison and James Loren purchased the property and laid out the formal neighborhood of North Broadway. It is possible that Mr. Cochran purchased the home from these developers. It is also possible that the photo is not correctly labeled.

The 1856 Map

