



James Ayer Smith:
Chicago Pioneer

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by Cyndy Richardson

With thanks to
Denise, Diana, Ellen, Harold,
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Each of you inspires me in a different way
and I'm grateful for that.

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Louise Grant Smith Richardson (1861-1941)
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with their love for genealogy and family history,
took the care to leave some stories behind.

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Please note: The James A. Smith papers available at the Chicago History Museum and the Minnesota Historical Society are cited as "JAS-CHM" and "JAS-MNHS" respectively. In places where *Old Fulton New York Post Cards* is cited, the paragraph-length URLs (necessary for quickly relocating images) have been shortened using bitly.com. All URLs current as of publication.

Cover photo: James Ayer Smith, c. 1828. A photo of the painting appears in Louise Richardson's self-published family history titled *Memories*.
Copy in possession of the author.

James Ayer Smith: Chicago Pioneer

In 1835, a young manufacturing hatter named James Ayer Smith moved his family from upstate New York to a small, but growing, Illinois town on the southwest tip of Lake Michigan--Chicago. Over the next forty years, "building, breaking, rebuilding," as the poet Carl Sandberg would say, Chicago grew into a thriving city.¹ James' life reflected similar ups and downs. At times he prospered. At times struggled. But he was always moving forward. The narrative that follows is a brief look at his story.

Generation One

1. **James¹ Ayer Smith**, son of Charles Smith and Sarah Ayer,² probably born 24 June 1807 in Paris, Oneida County, New York;³ died 22 July 1875, Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.⁴ He married, probably 1828 in Oneida County, New York, **Marcia Mahala Swetland**⁵ daughter of Benjamin Swetland and Rosanna Hancock.⁶

¹ Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1916), 3; digital image, *Google Books* (https://books.google.com/books?id=_kEDAAAAYAAJ).

² "Died," Charles Smith, *Waterville (New York) Times*, 29 February 1872, p. [3], col. 5; Waterville Library. "Died," *Waterville (New York) Times*, 23 July 1868, p. [3], col. 3, obituary, Sally Ayres [sic], wife of Charles Smith; Waterville Library. Both obituaries mention James as their son.

³ "Obituary. James A. Smith." *The Chicago Tribune*, 23 July 1875, p. 4., cols. 6-7; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/349740584/>). Also Louise Grant Smith Richardson, *Memories* ([?]: self-published, 1933), 6; copy given to Owen Richardson in possession of the author. And 1850 U. S. census, Cook County, Illinois, population schedule, Chicago, First Ward, n.p., dwelling 275, family 293, J. A. Smith; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 102. And 1850 U. S. census, Cook County, Illinois, population schedule, Chicago, First Ward, n.p., dwelling 275, family 293, J. A. Smith; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 102. And 1870 U. S. census, Cook County, Illinois, population schedule, Chicago, Fourth Ward, p. 112 (stamped), dwelling 1481, family 1632, James A. Smith; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 200. Conflicting direct evidence found in *American Ancestry: Giving the Name and Descent, in the Male Line, of Americans Whose Ancestors Settled in the United States Previous to the Declaration of Independence, A. D. 1776, Vol. IX* (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1894, 132; digital image, *Google Books* (<https://books.google.com/books>)) suggests a 12 January 1808 birth in Waterville, New York but the consistent ages recorded in the 1850, 1860, and 1870 censuses provide strong evidence for an 1807 birth year. The 1808 date might be from a christening record yet to be found.

⁴ Cook County, Illinois, death register entry no. D-120-13, James A. Smith, 22 July 1875; Cook County Clerk's Office, Chicago. This report of death is a modern extraction from a death register made by a clerk. Also Rosehill Cemetery Office (Chicago, Illinois), plat record, int. no. 9402, James A. Smith.

⁵ Richardson, *Memories*, 1. No marriage record has been found, but an 1828 marriage year is consistent with the 18 October 1828 birth date for their first child.

⁶ *Proceedings of the first annual meeting of the Swetland family, held at Brocton, N.Y., September 15, 1896*, (Brockton, New York: n.p., 15 September 1896), 15-16; digital image, *Internet Archive* (<https://archive.org/stream/proceedingsoffir00slsn>). And *Chicago Historical Society Charter, Constitution, By-laws, Membership List, Annual Report, 1903*, 35; digital image, *Google Books* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=7yJEAQAAMAAJ>). Unsourced genealogies link Marcia to her father, but the most compelling evidence of their relationship is indirect. Valentine Smith [daughter of William Wirt Smith, son of James Ayer Smith and Marcia Mahala Swetland] donated a "revolutionary note-book of Sergt. Maj. Benjamin Swetland" to the Chicago Historical Society. It's likely this artifact was passed from Benjamin to Marcia and eventually to Valentine.



The Paris Hill cemetery where James' grandparents are buried showing the modern upstate New York landscape. Photo by author.

Growing Up in Paris Hill

Charles Smith and Sarah Ayer married in Lincoln County, Maine after declaring their intention to wed on 24 August 1806.⁷ Within the year, they removed to property just outside the village of Paris Hill, Oneida County, New York.⁸ James Ayer Smith, their first child, was born there, probably on 24 June 1807.⁹

In the early 1800s, Paris Hill was a vibrant rural community. Located about eight miles southwest of Utica, the village thrived on industry. Blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, and coopers plied their trades beside those who made saddles, harnesses, and spinning wheels.¹⁰

⁷ Alna, Lincoln County, Maine Town Clerk, "Town and vital records, 1794-1892"; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/59397>) > film 10406 > image 215 of 690, 403, 24 August 1806 entry for Charles Smith and Sarah Ayer.

⁸ Daniel E. Wager, editor, *Our County and Its People: A Descriptive Work on Oneida County, New York* (Boston: The Boston History Company, 1896), 494. Charles Smith is mentioned as "living in the vicinity of the village, but not in it."

⁹ See note #3.

¹⁰ Wager, *Our County and Its People*, 494.

James' father farmed near the village.¹¹ He had a reputation for being a "profound scholar" and a "great reader ... gifted with an extraordinary memory ... richly stored with useful knowledge."¹² Educating his children was probably a priority and James may have attended one of the many local schools as a young boy.¹³

Later, James and his younger brother John apprenticed with Horace Bigelow, a hat manufacturer in the neighboring town of Sangerfield.¹⁴ Bigelow held stock in Waterville's first bank and by 1870 he had amassed personal property worth \$70,000--considerably more than any of his neighbors.¹⁵ James' father may have guided his sons into the apprenticeship believing Bigelow would teach them a trade that would lead to similar financial success.

What did hatters do in the 1820s? Beaver hats were in fashion. Making them meant scraping hair from animal skins and working it into bats. The felt was then dyed in large kettles and shaped over hat-shaped wooden forms. Finishing work included trimming the brims, smoothing the surfaces, sewing in sweat bands, and perhaps adding decorative elements.¹⁶ Because pelts were a necessary raw material, hatters often engaged in the fur trade. A successful hatter needed the skills of a mechanic, the eye of a designer, and the know-how of a savvy entrepreneur.

The Binghamton Years

In 1828, two months short of his twenty-first birthday, James opened a hat shop in Binghamton, about eighty miles south of Paris Hill, offering "gentlemen's fashionable ... hats of the first quality" and advertising for

¹¹For location, see Wager, *Our County and Its People*, 494. For occupation, see Chas. Smith, Paris, New York, to "Dear Son" [James A. Smith], Chicago, 12 August 1835; JAS-CHM. The letter mentions Charles haying, suggesting he farmed.

¹²"Died," Charles Smith, *Waterville (New York) Times*, 29 February 1872, p. [3], col. 5; Waterville Public Library.

¹³Horatio Gates Spafford, *A Gazetteer of the State of New-York; Carefully Written from Original and Authentic Materials ...* (Albany: H. C. Southwick, 1813, 270; digital image, *Google Books* (<https://books.google.com>)).

¹⁴"Died," Sally Ayres [*sic*], wife of Charles Smith, *Waterville (New York) Times*, 23 July 1868, p. [3], col. 3; Waterville Public Library.

¹⁵For bank association, see Wager, *Our County and Its People*, 539. For property ownership see 1870 U. S. census, Oneida County, New York, population schedule, Sangerfield, Deansville Post Office, p. 40 (penned), dwelling 315, family 325, Horace Bigelow; digital image, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 1059 and FHL microfilm 552558.

¹⁶"From Pelt to Felt: the Making of a Beaver Top Hat," *Fur Traders & Rendezvous*, website (<http://www.alfredjacobmiller.com/explore/from-pelt-to-felt/>). Also "The Beaver Fur Hat - The Fashion of Europe," *Deer River Minnesota White Oak Society*, website (<http://whiteoakhistoricalsociety.org/historical-library/fur-trade/the-beaver-fur-hat/>). For a detailed description of the hat and cap trade in 1860, see "Introduction (Hats and Caps)," *Manufacturers of the United States in 1860* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865), cliv-clxii; *Google Books* (<https://books.google.com>)).



The young Marcia Mahala Swetland who would "stand behind the lace curtains in the 'parlor' and watch 'Jim Smith' go by." From Louise Richardson's *Memories*. Copy in possession of the author.

"hatting and shipping furs."¹⁷ Eight months later he bought property in the village of Binghamton for five hundred dollars.¹⁸ And, probably sometime during the year, he married Marcia Mahala Swetland of Waterville, daughter of Benjamin Swetland and Rosanna Hancock.¹⁹

After settling in Binghamton, the Smiths joined the First Presbyterian Church. Marcia was admitted by confession on 4 July 1830.²⁰ James was received by examination and baptism on 30 March 1834.²¹ Two sons were baptized on 9 July 1831--Charles, probably born 18 October 1828, and Julius, born after.²² Julius died on the day of his baptism.²³ A third son Henry was baptized on 27 March 1832.²⁴ He died on 3 April 1832.²⁵ A fourth son, James Thomas, was born about 1834 but he is not mentioned in the Binghamton church records.²⁶

James was appointed Second Lieutenant of Cavalry, 201st Regiment, 41st Brigade, 19th Division of the New York State Militia on 22 February 1831.²⁷ He also served as an Inspector

¹⁷ "New Hat Store," *Broome Republican (Binghamton, New York)*, 26 February 1829, p. [4], col. 5; digital image, *Old Fulton New York Post Cards* (<https://bit.ly/2ImaJ1S>). The date in the advertisement suggests it first appeared 23 April 1828. [I am pursuing a copy of that issue.]

¹⁸ Broome County, New York, Book of Deeds, v. 11, 332, Collier and Merrill to James A. Smith, 26 December 1828; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-99W8-4WF8>) > "New York Land Records, 1630-1975" > Broome > Deeds 1828-1830, vol. 11-12 > image 196 of 565.

¹⁹ See note #6.

²⁰ "U.S., Presbyterian Church Records, 1701-1970," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61048>) > New York > Binghamton > First Presbyterian Church > Records > 1817-1837 > image 341 of 416; membership list, entry for Marcia Smith.

²¹ *Ibid.* > image 318 of 416; membership list, entry for James A. Smith.

²² *Ibid.* > image 382 of 416; children of James A. & Marcia Smith.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ "Died," Mr. Thos. Smith, *The Free Press (Detroit, Michigan)*, 19 February 1863, p. 2, col. 4; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/118137465/>). Birth year calculated from age at death. James Thomas doesn't appear in the family entry in Binghamton church records.

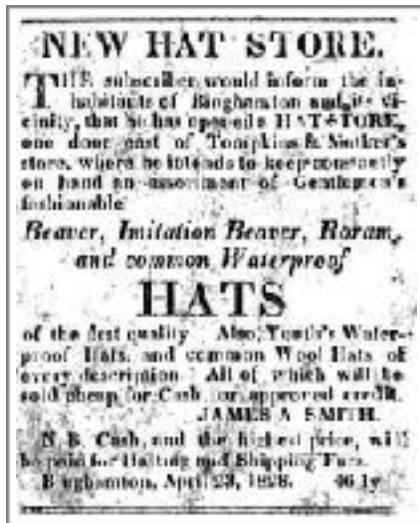
²⁷ Military appointment for James A. Smith, signed by E. T. Throop, 22 February 1831; JAS-CHS.

of Common Schools in 1831 and as a member of the Whig's Town Committee.²⁸

Five years after James opened his store, he paid fifty dollars to obtain "the full right and liberty of making and using" a six-feet in diameter kettle "for the purpose of Coloring the Hats to be manufactured by himself only."²⁹ A year later, his brother John signed on as a co-partner.³⁰

The business continued for seven years, but lawsuits against James and his brother suggest it failed to thrive. In July 1834, for example, a judgement for \$33.95 was issued against James by the local justice court.³¹ The brothers' partnership was dissolved two months later, likely for legal reasons, but they continued to work together.³² In October 1834 another judgment was issued, this time against both James and John for \$47.66.³³

Maybe they could have weathered the financial difficulties in New York, but Chicago offered an opportunity for a fresh start with a chance to prosper. The area was poised to grow from a small town into a thriving city and an influx of settlers from the East had already begun.³⁴



Binghamton advertisement published 16 May 1828 in the *Broome Republican*. Image from *Old Fulton New York Post Cards* (<https://bit.ly/2tpfxPh>).

²⁸ For school inspector, see "Town Meeting," *Broome Republican (Binghamton, New York)*, 3 March 1831, p. [2], col. 2; digital image, *Old Fulton New York Post Cards* (<https://bit.ly/2KcVH3t>). "Chenango," *Broome Republican (Binghamton, New York)*, 25 September 1834, p. [2], col. 2; digital image, *Old Fulton New York Post Cards* (<https://bit.ly/2ImUeCH>).

²⁹ "Improvement for Colouring Hats," agreement between James A. Smith and Austin B. Trowbridge, signed 15 February 1832; James A. Smith Papers, JAS-CHM.

³⁰ "New Firm," *Broome Republican (Binghamton, New York)*, 9 January 1834, p. 4, col. 3; digital image, *Old Fulton NY Post Cards* (<https://bit.ly/2yCcLLX>).

³¹ "Justices docket, 1819-1838," *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/253628>) > Docket 1822-1838 > image 253 of 468, Bosworth vs Smith, judgment, 25 July 1834, 158, Justices Docket No. 3, Broome County, New York.

³² Dissolution agreement between James A. Smith and John M. Smith dated 13 September 1834; JAS-CHM. Also "Notice," *Broome Republican (Binghamton, New York)*, 2 July 1835, p. 3, col. 1; digital image, *Old Fulton New York Post Cards* (<https://bit.ly/2KcFDLR>). John posted public notice that he was collecting debts for J. A. Smith & Co., evidence that he was still associated with the firm.

³³ "Justices docket, 1819-1838," *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/253628>) > Docket 1822-1838 > image 254 of 468, Munsell vs Smith & Smith, judgment, 25 July 1834, 161, Justices Docket No. 3, Broome County, New York.

³⁴ See, for example, William Vipond Pooley, *The Settlement of Illinois from 1830 to 1850*, thesis submitted to the University of Wisconsin, 1905, in *Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin N. 220, History Series No. 1, Vol. 4* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1908), 476-480; digital image, *Google Books* (https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Settlement_of_Illinois_from_1830_to.html?id=4P4TAAAYAAJ).



Water route from Oneida County to Buffalo to Chicago indicated by the dotted line. Map from Benjamin Franklin Edmands, *The Boston School Atlas; Embracing a Compendium of Geography* (Boston: Robert S. Davis, 1841), 24; *Google Books*. Dotted route added digitally.

James' preparations for relocating to Illinois proceeded quickly. By March of 1835, "H. Bigelow," almost certainly the master mechanic who had trained the brothers, had taken over the store.³⁵ In April, James and Marcia sold their Binghamton property to James' father Charles for six hundred fifty dollars.³⁶ And, in early May James was honorably discharged from the 201st Regiment at his request.³⁷ They were also dismissed from the Presbyterian church.³⁸

By May 16, James was back in Oneida County where he signed a business agreement with his father creating a "copartnership in the business of Making and vending Hats, caps, and transacting of all matters relating to the Hat, Cap & fur business." His father was to furnish the necessary capital and James was

³⁵ "New Cheap Cash Hat and Cap Store," display advertisement, *Broome Republican (Binghamton, New York)*, 19 March 1835, p. 3, col. 4; digital image, *Old Fulton New York Post Cards* (<https://bit.ly/2yCcLLX>). Also Gilman Bigelow Howe, *Genealogy of the Bigelow Family of America ...* (Worcester, Massachusetts: Charles Hamilton, 1890), 455; *Google Books* (<https://books.google.com/>). Family information shows Horace Bigelow's son Horace was born in 1838, too late to have been the one to take over James' business.

³⁶ "Deed records, 1806-1877; index, 1791-1801, 1806-1962," digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/235400>) > Deed records v. 17-18 1835-1836 > image 54 of 576, Liber 17, Page 76, James A. Smith and wife Marcia to Charles Smith, 23 April 1835.

³⁷ Brigade order accepting the resignation of James A. Smith signed by Vincent Whitney, 5 May 1835; JAS-CHM.

³⁸ "U.S., Presbyterian Church Records, 1701-1970," *Ancestry* (<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61048>) > New York > Binghamton > First Presbyterian Church > Records > 1817-1837 >, image 318 of 416, membership entry for James A. Smith, and image 341 of 416, membership list, entry for Marcia Smith.

to attend to the business with no charge for his services. Profits or losses were to be divided equally after his father's initial capital was deducted.³⁹

James then started for Chicago leaving Marcia and their children, six-year-old Charles and toddler James Thomas, with family in Oneida County. Around July 20 Marcia and their sons set out for "Gordan [*sic*], Port Byron & Mendon," towns to the west of Utica along the Erie Canal. James' father wrote that "her health was not good but improving" and that the two boys were "in good health & spirits."⁴⁰

James met his family, possibly in Rochester, to escort them the rest of the way.⁴¹ The trip could be made by land or it could be made by boat across the Great Lakes. James' father "advised Marcia to go all the way by water rather than to be draged [*sic*] through Michigan by land, thinking it would "cost something more" but be "less fatiguing."⁴² A family history suggests the family "embarked on the side-wheel steamer 'United States,' at Buffalo, and were thirteen days en route to Chicago, touching at every point, including Green Bay, Wis."⁴³

What was Chicago like when the Smiths arrived? In the words of Caroline Palmer Clarke, another Oneida County, New York transplant who reached Chicago about a month after the Smiths did, the weather was "delightful beyond anything" and the water was "as pure and good tasted as any." She noted that buildings were small and "look[ed] as though they ... [had] ... been put up as quickly as possible" but she also thought that once "good houses" were built, it would be "very pleasant indeed." To her, society was "perfectly unorganized and unsettled, from the great influx of strangers" but she felt that the soon-to-be city would "eventually become very pleasant."⁴⁴

Settling the Binghamton Affairs

James's hasty departure from Binghamton left John to settle their New York affairs.⁴⁵ His first challenge was to figure out what was owed. Soon after James left, he wrote, "I want you to give me a memorandum of all demands

³⁹ Agreement between Chas. Smith and James A. Smith signed 16 May 1835; JAS-CHM.

⁴⁰ Chas. Smith to "Dear Son," 12 August 1835; JAS-CHM.

⁴¹ "The James A. Smith Family in Chicago," 1; typed manuscript, JAS-CHM. A handwritten note reads "Compiled from memoranda of [blank space] Smith and W. W. Smith."

⁴² Chas. Smith, Paris, New York, to "Dear Son" [James A. Smith], Chicago, 12 August 1835; JAS-CHM.

⁴³ "The James A. Smith Family in Chicago," 1; JAS-CHM.

⁴⁴ Transcript, Caroline [Caroline Parker Clarke] to "My dear Mary [Mary Clarke Walker], Chicago, 1 November 1835; digital file, *City of Chicago* (<https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en.html>) > Departments > Cultural Affairs and Special Events > Supporting Info > The Clarkes > letter to her sister in law (PDF) > <https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/dca/Clarke%20House%20Museum/carolinesLETTER.pdf>

⁴⁵ "Notice," *Broome Republican (Binghamton, New York)*, 2 July 1835, p. 3, col. 1; digital image, *Old Fulton New York Post Cards* (<https://bit.ly/2KcFDLR>).

against you or the company in this place or county near here."⁴⁶ The next step was to collect their accounts to generate funds to pay their bills. This task was made challenging by a scarcity of cash. When John sold a horse for \$80, he was only able to get "thirty dollars down." The rest was paid with a note.⁴⁷ Similarly, an offer of \$650 for a lot included payment of a \$300 outstanding judgment and \$350 in rifles.⁴⁸ It worked both ways, though. John was able to clear a debt with a wagon painter for a hat plus cash.⁴⁹

The Binghamton business continued to be unprofitable after Bigelow took over, in part, John suggested, because it was "impossible for Bigelow to make good hats," and in part because people were hesitant to trade with a business run by someone they didn't know.⁵⁰ By July Bigelow was "sick enough of this establishment" and was eager to have John "wind it up as soon as possible."⁵¹

Bigelow had a \$708.57 stake in the Binghamton business but he had only realized \$326.70.⁵² John was determined to pay him back even if it meant working off the debt.⁵³ John was also eager to "be clear of him [Bigelow] as soon as possible" as he felt that they could "never Make anything with him."⁵⁴ John must have been successful in settling up, because he was in Chicago by the fall.⁵⁵

Establishing the Chicago Business

Soon after John arrived, "C. Smith & co." was advertised in the *Chicago Democrat* for the first time.⁵⁶ He probably purchased many of the hats and caps offered the first season in New York, possibly bringing them to Chicago by stagecoach.⁵⁷ However, the long-range plan was to engage in manufacturing. James' father felt "a mechanic ought to make his trade a source of wealth instead of throwing it up & becoming a ... merchant." "Manufacturing, he said, would "be using a small capital to better advantage

⁴⁶ Jno. M. Smith, Binghamton, to "Dr. Brother [James A. Smith], Paris, New York, 11 May 1835; JAS-MNHS.

⁴⁷ Jno. M. Smith, Binghamton, to "Dr. Brother [James A. Smith], Paris, New York, 15 May 1835; JAS-MNHS

⁴⁸ J. M. Smith, Binghamton, to "Dr. Brother [James A. Smith], Chicago, 3 September 1835; JAS-MNHS

⁴⁹ Jno. M. Smith to "Dr. Brother, 11 May 1835; JAS-MNHS.

⁵⁰ J. M. Smith, Binghamton, to "Dear Brother [James A. Smith], Chicago, 10 July 1835; JAS-MNHS

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Jno. M. Smith, Binghamton, to "Dr. Brother [James A. Smith], Chicago, 27 August 1835; JAS-MNHS

⁵⁴ J. M. Smith, to "Dear Brother," 10 July 1835; JAS-MNHS.

⁵⁵ Chas. Smith to "Dear Son," 12 August 1835; JAS-CHM. The letter mentions Charles' plans to close the business and leave Binghamton in October. If he brought stock with him to Chicago (see note #55), then it's likely he arrived before the business was advertised on 4 November 1835 (see note #53).

⁵⁶ Display advertisement for C. Smith & Co., *Chicago Democrat*, 4 November 1835, p. 3, col. 1; digital image from microfilm, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois.

⁵⁷ "Long Life Ended, John M. Smith of Dundee, Father of Supervisor, Dies Wednesday." Digital copy in possession of the author. Original source is unknown. [I am working on locating the newspaper.]

than by merely buying & selling because the latter requires twice the capital to produce the ^same amount of proffit [*sic*]."58

Taking Up Residence in Chicago

Over the next few years, James settled into the growing community, building life-long relationships with other early pioneers.⁵⁹ When the Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, a volunteer fire fighters group, was formed in 1837, he was among the first to sign up.⁶⁰ After the city's incorporation on 4 March 1837, he cast a ballot in the first mayoral election.⁶¹ And, in 1839, he was sworn in to represent the First Ward as an alderman on the city council.⁶² That same year he may have also been appointed deputy sheriff with the understanding that he would "transact the general business of the office."⁶³

Land speculation was widespread in 1835, but James' father advised against it. Hearing that a family friend had offered James a lot for two-hundred-fifty dollars, he wrote, "I hope you will not take it at present but wait til this rage for speculation subsides & you are better prepared to buy."⁶⁴ Four months later, however, James bought just over eighty acres for five hundred dollars.⁶⁵ The property's southwest corner would have included a portion of today's Dan Ryan Woods which is about twelve miles



This advertisement appeared in the *Chicago Democrat*. Image from the 3 February 1836 paper on microfilm, Harold Washington Library, Chicago.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ See, for example, "Fernando Jones, Pioneer, Dead," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 9 November 1911, p. 1, col. 3; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/355015537>) and "The James A. Smith Family in Chicago," 4; JAS-CHM. The history quotes pioneer Fernando Jones as using the phrase "friend and neighbor for over sixty years" in a speech he gave at James' son William's funeral.

⁶⁰ Alfred Theodore Andreas, *History of Chicago from the Earliest Period to the Present Time, v. 1 Ending with the Year 1857* (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1884), 222; digital image, *Google Books* (<https://books.google.com>).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁶² Chicago City Council Proceedings Documents, 1833-1871, document no. 792, Official Oath of Alderman James A. Smith, First Ward, dated 7 September 1839; Illinois Regional Archives Depository, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois.

⁶³ "The James A. Smith Family in Chicago," 4; JAS-CHM.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Tegal Trader and wife Sally to James A. Smith, warrantee deed, 9 December 1835; JAS-CHM.



Photo of Margareta Ballinger Grant and James Thomas Smith taken in Detroit, c. 1860. Photo from Louise Richardson's self-published family history titled *Memories*. Copy in possession of the author.

from the heart of Chicago.⁶⁶ James might have had plans to build on the land--his brother had suggested in August that he could buy a lot outside of town and erect a house for what he would pay in rent the first year--but the family took up residence in the city in an area convenient to James' business.⁶⁷

Weathering the Depression

The chance for prosperity offered by Chicago in the mid-1830s was displaced by a nation-wide depression 1839-1843 and James' business fell on hard times. The economy was probably a factor but the waning popularity of the beaver hat and growing competition from other hatters and furriers might have also played a role. In the fall of 1842, he filed for debt relief.⁶⁸

Two years later both James and John were associated with L. P. Sanger & Co., a hat, cap and fur store at 110 Lake Street.⁶⁹ The establishment was probably a branch of Lorenzo P. Sanger's Ottawa-based mercantile business located in LaSalle County, Illinois.⁷⁰ If James A. Smith & Co. continued to manufacture and sell independently, they may not have advertised it.⁷¹ However, by 1845 L. P. Sanger had moved to 134 Lake Street and in 1846, James was listed in the city directory under his own name at the 110 Lake Street address.⁷²

Home on Dearborn Park

On 13 July 1848, James and Marcia took out a \$3750 mortgage on a \$5000 piece of a property located at the corner of Randolph and Dearborn. The

⁶⁶ U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records, website (<https://glorerecords.blm.gov/default.aspx>) > Search Documents > Land Description > Township 38, Range 14, Section #6, entry for Tegal Trader dated 1 October 1839 > Patent Details > Land Descriptions > Map.

⁶⁷ "The James A. Smith Family in Chicago," 1-2; JAS-CHM.

⁶⁸ [No title], *Illinois Weekly State Journal (Springfield)*, 4 November 1842, p. 4, col. 6; digital image, *GenealogyBank* (<https://www.genealogybank.com>).

⁶⁹ J. W. Norris, *General Directory and Business Advertiser of the City of Chicago for the Year 1844 with a Historical Sketch and Statistics extending from 1837 to 1844* (Chicago: Ellis & Fergus, 1844); Re-published by T. F. Bohan, 1903; digital image, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>).

⁷⁰ See, for example, display advertisement, *The Ottawa (Illinois) Free Trader*, 1 July 1842, p. 5, col. 5-6; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/78607871/>).

⁷¹ For example, a search for "j a smith" between 1842-1846 at *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com>) returns twelve advertisements in the *Ottawa (Illinois) Free Trader* for 1846, but none for the previous years. The same search at *GenealogyBank* (<https://www.genealogybank.com>) returns no matches. Similarly, no classified advertisement appears in J. W. Norris, *General Directory and Business Advertiser of the City of Chicago for the Year 1844 ...* (Chicago: Ellis & Fergus, 1844), 100-101; republished by T. F. Bohan, 1903.

⁷² [Unknown]; digital image, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/227/74978167>). There is no title page but information provided by *Fold3* suggests it is from an 1845 directory published by J. Campbell & Co. Also, J. W. Norris, *Norris' Business Directory, and Statistics of the City of Chicago for 1846* (Chicago: Eastman & Davidson, 1846), 73; digital image, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/227/74984144>).



From stereograph titled "Lake Street East from Clark." The tallest building reads "[S]mith & Co. [Ca]ps and Furs" with a "118" below. Image from the New York Public Library (<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e0-5dda-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>).

lot with its two-story frame house was one of many that bordered Dearborn Park.⁷³

The location offered an unobstructed view of Lake Michigan and provided a front row seat for events that reflected the pulse of the city. In July of 1852, the lake-front park hosted a rousing rally for presidential candidate Franklin Pierce, during which "300 guns were fired."⁷⁴ In May of 1855, a French "Pyrotechnist and Balloonist" presented fire works and a "balloon ascension."⁷⁵ And, in August of 1860, the park was the gathering place for a

⁷³ For house, see lease between James A. Smith and Benjamin F. Ray dated 2 May 1864; JAS-MNHS. For location, see "Business Portion of Chicago, 1862," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, website (<http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/10632.html>).

⁷⁴ "Grand Democratic Rally!--The Masses Moving!--300 Guns for Pierce!!" *The Union (Washington, D.C.)*, 2 July 1852, p. [3], col. 3; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/319406335>).

⁷⁵ "Glorious News," display advertisement, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, p. [3], col. 1; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/371132777>).

grand procession to welcome Chicago's famed Zouave Cadets back from a tour of eastern cities.⁷⁶

The Second Presbyterian Church was at the opposite end of the block.⁷⁷ James and Marcia transferred their membership in Chicago's First Presbyterian Church to it on 5 January 1849.⁷⁸ James would later serve as a trustee (1853-1861).⁷⁹

Evolution of the Firm

James' brother John was instrumental in helping to establish the Chicago business. "Always well liked and respected ... as much for his congenial good fellowship as for his upright and honest character," he was probably an asset to firm."⁸⁰ But, eventually, he moved on.

At the advice of their father, and with his promise to help with the financing, the brothers explored the land to the west of Chicago near the Fox River and John found the area appealing.⁸¹ By 1840, he was living in Dundee, Kane County, Illinois, presumably with his wife and young son.⁸² However, an 1844 Chicago directory lists him as a hatter with L. P. Sanger with a home on Clark Street.⁸³ It's likely he spent time in both places before permanently settling in Dundee.

As James' sons came of age, they went to work for the business. Charles, the oldest, was working for his father by 1853. He became a partner in the firm and continued with J. A. Smith & Co. until his father's death. Then, after liquidating the firm's assets, he went to work as a salesman for Erby & Perolat, a large Chicago hatter.⁸⁴ James Thomas traveled for the firm and by

⁷⁶ "Reception of the Zouave Cadets," *The Press and Tribune (Chicago, Illinois)*, 6 August 1860, p. 1, col. 4; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/372419059>).

⁷⁷ "Business Portion of Chicago, 1862," *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, website (<http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/10632.html>).

⁷⁸ *The Second Presbyterian Church of Chicago. June 1st, 1842 to June 1st 1892* (Chicago: Knight, Leonard, & Co, 1892); digital images, *Google Books* (<https://books.google.com/books>), 201.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, xv.

⁸⁰ "Aged Citizen Gone, John M. Smith Died Wednesday Afternoon, Aged 93 years, 8 months," digital copy in possession of the author. Original source is unknown. [I am working on locating the newspaper.]

⁸¹ Draft of biography of John M. Smith, author unknown; Kane County Historical Society, Elgin, Illinois.

⁸² 1840 U. S. census, Kane County, Illinois, population schedule, p. 8 (stamped), entry for John M. Smith with 1 female of 20 and under 30 and 1 male under 5; digital image, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/8057/4411226_00020?pid=1950285); citing NARA microfilm publication M704.

⁸³ J. W. Norris, *General Directory and Business Advertiser of the City of Chicago for the Year 1844 with a Historical Sketch and Statistics extending from 1837 to 1844* (Chicago: Ellis & Fergus, 1844); Re-published by T. F. Bohan, 1903; digital image, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>).

⁸⁴ See, for example, "Furs! Furs! Hats! Caps!, display advertisement, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 29 October 1876, p. 1, col. 5; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/349589317/>). Stock to be sold at half price, then auctioned. And "Ladies!" display advertisement, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 5 November 1876, p. 5, col.7; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/349592177/>).

185? he had opened a branch of the company--J. T. Smith & Co. in Detroit.⁸⁵ His work captured accolades at the Michigan State Fair, but the business was short-lived. He died suddenly in 1863.⁸⁶ Francis Marion ("Frank") and William Wirt began their association with the firm as early as 1859 when both were working as salesmen.⁸⁷ **They continued with the firm at least through 1872** and sought work outside of the hatting industry after their father's death.⁸⁸ When Frank died, his death certificate showed him as a "promoter."⁸⁹ When William died, he was an accountant.⁹⁰

The 1857 Fire

In the pre-dawn hours of 19 October 1857, a "most disastrous conflagration, both as to the loss of life and property" broke out downtown and engulfed many of the Lake and Water Street businesses.⁹¹ The *Chicago Tribune* reported the "five story and basement marble front store" that James rented was destroyed and a \$10,000 loss resulted from "removal of goods, damage from water and ... thieving." The business was insured for \$40,000.⁹² Three days later, an agent for the How & Hartford Fire Insurance Companies offered to pay his company's proportion of a \$3000 settlement if "all other companies interested" agreed to the same, which they did.⁹³ James A. Smith & Co. reopened at 118 Lake Street.⁹⁴

The fire may have caused or contributed to a new set of financial difficulties for James. Sometime previous to 3 May 1859, he, with his son

⁸⁵ James Thomas' daughter Cornelia was born in Chicago in 1859; his daughter Louise was born in St. Louis in 1861. See note #167 and note #169. He is likely the "J. T. Smith, hatter and furrier" who appears in *Johnston's Detroit City Directory and Advertising Gazetteer* (Detroit, Michigan: James Dale Johnston & Co, 1861), 277; digital image, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/234/100511314>).

⁸⁶ See note #151.

⁸⁷ R. V. Kennedy & Co., compiler, *D. B. Cooke & Co's City Directory For the Year 1859-60* (Chicago: D. B. Cooke & Co., 1859), 386 entry for Frank M. Smith and 389 entry for William W. Smith; digital image, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/227/75093031> and <https://www.fold3.com/image/227/65431900>).

⁸⁸ *Edwards' New City Directory* (Chicago: Richard Edwards, 1872), 866, entry for Frank M. Smith, and 872, entry for W. W. Smith; digital image, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/227/77689276> and <https://www.fold3.com/image/227/77689282>).

⁸⁹ Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 18070 (13 October 1899), Francis M. Smith; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-D1H1-N5?i=1264&cat=42925>) > "Chicago death certificates, 1878-1915" > microfilm 1033071 > image 1265 of 1821.

⁹⁰ Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 18955 (16 January 1903), William Wirt Smith; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6LX9-DV7?i=1360&cat=42925>) > "Chicago death certificates, 1878-1915," microfilm 1239691 > image 1361 of 1746.

⁹¹ "Great Fire in Chicago, Terrible Loss of Life! Nineteen Bodies Rescued from the Ruins," *Rockford Republican*, 22 October 1857, p. 2, col. 3; digital image, *GenealogyBank* (<https://www.genealogybank.com>).

⁹² "Terrible Conflagration. Loss Over Five Hundred Thousand Dollars! Thirteen Lives Lost! Details, Incidents, Etc.," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 October 1857, p. 1, col. 2; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/346801160/>).

⁹³ Agreement between How & Hartford Fire Insurance Companies, et. al, and James A. Smith & Co., signed 22 October 1857; JAS-MNHS.

⁹⁴ *Chicago City Directory* ([Chicago]: John Gager & Co., [1858], 308; digital image, *Fold3.com* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/227/75071883>)). The title page for this volume is missing.

Charles, "made an assignment of all his property real and personal together with his rights and credits for the benefit of his creditors and the creditors of James A. Smith and Charles B. Smith" to Andrew Blaikie.⁹⁵ On May 3, unsold property was returned to James with the exception of the east half of the Dearborn lot which was retained as a security. It was returned by quit claim deed the following year.⁹⁶

Despite the challenges, the business held on. In September 1859 James A. Smith & Co. exhibited at the United States Agricultural Society's National Fair held in Chicago and was awarded a "grand silver medal" and a diploma of honor" for the "splendid hats and furs."⁹⁷ In 1860, the firm was reported to be manufacturing \$20,000 in men and women's fur goods and \$10,000 in cloth and plush hats and caps annually. The company employed eight females and eight males at an average of \$2 and \$50 each per month.⁹⁸ James likely oversaw day-to-day operations.

In March 1864 a "James Smith" was "convening with some of the workmen" when he fell through a "hatchway to the ground, three stories distant." He escaped with a "bruised finger."⁹⁹

A Move to Sherman House

In 1861, the Smiths moved from Dearborn, possibly prompted by a desire to get away from noise generated by cobblestones that had been installed on Randolph near their home.¹⁰⁰ They took up residence at Sherman House, a newly-rebuilt six-story hotel located at the



Sherman House as depicted in A. T. Andreas' *History of Chicago*, v. 3 (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1884), 354.

⁹⁵ Agreement between Andrew Blaikie and James A. Smith dated 3 May 1859; JAS-MNHS.

⁹⁶ Quit claim deed, Andrew Blaikie & wife to James A. Smith, dated 15 February 1860; JAS-MNHS.

⁹⁷ "A Merited Award," *Press and Tribune (Chicago, Illinois)*, 23 September 1859, p. 1, col. 2; digital image, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/43/80016830>). For information about the Fair, see, for example, "The National Fair," *Press and Tribune (Chicago, Illinois)*, 23 August 1859, p. 1, col. 3-4; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/346831427/>).

⁹⁸ 1860 U. S. census, Cook County, Illinois, industry schedule, Chicago, Ward 23, p. 1 (penned), entry no. 17, J A Smith & Co; digital image, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/1276/t1133_30-00042); citing Archive Collection No. T1133, roll 30.

⁹⁹ "Narrow Escape," *Chicago Tribune*, 31 March 1864, p. 4, col. ; digital image; *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/371960117>).

¹⁰⁰ "The James A. Smith Family in Chicago," 2; JAS-CHM.

corner of Clark and Randolph in the heart of the city.¹⁰¹ It offered opulent surroundings with public areas including a "private reading room for ladies," a "gentleman's conversation parlor," a billiard room, and a balcony overlooking the city. Modern improvements--a "steam car" and ventilation system--offered comfort. Street-level businesses such as a druggist, a bank, railroad ticket offices, and a telegraph office, offered convenience.¹⁰²

James and Marcia spent two years at Sherman House then leased the Burch house at 128 Michigan Avenue for \$2300 per year on 12 March 1863.¹⁰³ They had use of the large, fashionable home, along with its "out-houses graperies green houses & garden" and "household furniture."¹⁰⁴

Looking for Business Opportunities

By the 1860s, James A. Smith & Co. had been in business in Chicago for twenty-five years. Their stock of hats and caps changed as fashion moved forward and they expanded their manufacturing to include fur apparel.¹⁰⁵ They also offered related services--moth-proof fur storage, for example.¹⁰⁶ But, to remain viable, they had to find expanded ways to make a profit and James saw opportunities at every turn. When the Wide Awakes, a Republican paramilitary youth group that rallied in the months leading up to the 1860 presidential election, needed uniforms, torch lamps, and drill manuals, James A. Smith & Co. was ready to ship them out.¹⁰⁷ When General John C. Fremont needed caps for his Civil War units, the company was ready and willing to make them.¹⁰⁸ Membership in the 103-member Manufacturers' Association, where

¹⁰¹ T. M. Halpin, *Halpin & Bailey's Chicago City Directory For the Year 1861—62 ...* (Chicago: Halpin & Bailey, 1861); digital image, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/2469/dvm_lochist005482-00001_0#?imageId=4524123). And, T. M. Halpin, *Halpin & Bailey's Chicago City Directory For the Year 1862—63 ...* (Chicago: Halpin & Bailey, 1862; digital image, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/2469/dvm_lochist005482-00001_0#?imageId=4522844)).

¹⁰² "The Opening of the New Sherman House, Details of the Building and Its Appointments," *Chicago Tribune*, 8 July 1861, p. 4, cols. 2-3; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/349162209>).

¹⁰³ Lease between Wirt Dexter and James A. Smith for 128 Michigan Avenue property dated 12 March 1863; JAS-MNHS

¹⁰⁴ See T. M. Halpin, *Halpin & Bailey's Chicago City Directory For the Year 1863-64 ...* (Chicago: Halpin & Bailey, 1863), 421; digital image, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/2469/dvm_lochist005482-00001_0#?imageId=4507956). Also Lease between Wirt Dexter and James A. Smith for 128 Michigan Avenue property dated 12 March 1863; JAS-MNHS.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, "To Country Merchants," display advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, 20 April 1861, p. 2, col. 8; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/370744662>), advertising "all the Latest Styles," including "Soft Fur, Wool, and Straw Hats." And "\$100,000 Worth of Hats, Caps, and Fur Goods," display advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, 30 January 1858, p. 4, col. 7; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/346808731>), advertising "Ladies' and Gents' Fine Fur Goods ... mostly of our own manufacturer."

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, "Furs Received on Storage," display advertisement, *Chicago Tribune*, 9 June 1862, p. 2, col. 9; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/357428772>).

¹⁰⁷ "Wide Awake Uniforms," classified advertisement, *The Press and Tribune* (Chicago, Illinois), 26 May 1860, p. 1, col. 5; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/371746984>).

¹⁰⁸ "The James A. Smith Family in Chicago," 3; JAS-CHM.

he was elected Second Vice President in 1862, probably helped him cultivate and maintain important business connections.¹⁰⁹

The North West Fur Company

In early 1865, James found an opportunity to partner with New York City furrier C. Francis Bates and Upper Missouri traders James B. Hubbell and Alpheus F. Hawley for a short-term business endeavor and the North West Fur Company was born.¹¹⁰ The fur trading heyday was over, but there was still money to be made, not only in trade, but in fulfilling government contracts to provide treaty-related goods to Native American tribes, and in transporting miners to the Upper Missouri gold fields.

Hubbell had the know-how and the government-issued license to trade with Native American tribes in the area and politics had just given him the chance to buy out his long-established competitor, Charles P. Chouteau. Hubbell acquired new goods and trading posts in the deal, but he needed money to move forward.¹¹¹ Bates provided the much-needed capital, including the funds to commission a new Missouri River side-wheeler with "the latest and best improvements for speed, safety, and the convenient and rapid handling of freight" to be built in St. Louis--the *Frank Bates*.¹¹² James provided capital, too, but he also took on the responsibility for purchasing requisitioned goods in Chicago or St. Louis--wherever the best deals were--and arranging for transport.¹¹³ Hubbell and Hawley oversaw the field operations from Mankato, Minnesota.¹¹⁴

As part of his work, James made "frequent trips up the Missouri River to Fort Benton" and on one excursion, he took Margaretta, his son Thomas' young widow, and his oldest granddaughter Cornelia along. They returned home talking about "bluffs and rich river flats along the great river" and "the occasional sight of the roaming bands of Indians, often meeting the boat as it made landings to deliver freight, take on wood for fuel, and to pick up consignments for furs."¹¹⁵

The North West Fur Company was profitable, but the gains might have come at the expense of integrity. Hubbell had a history of questionable

¹⁰⁹ "Meeting of the Manufacturers' Association--Election of Officers," *Chicago Tribune*, 31 December 1862, p. 4, col. 6; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/353937246>).

¹¹⁰ Barton H. Barbour, *Fort Union and the Upper Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 221. Barton provides a detailed explanation of the partnership's formation and activities. The company is sometimes referred to as the Northwest or Northwestern Fur Company but "North West" has been used here for consistency.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 220-221.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 222. And "Gleanings from Exchanges, The Frank Bates," *Daily Missouri Democrat (St. Louis)*, p. 4, col. 7; digital image, *GenealogyBank* (<https://www.genealogybank.com/doc/newspapers/image/v2:14CB11CBBA293378@GB3NEWS-1584AAF8CFD8B788@2402656-15835136D7120568@3>).

¹¹³ Fort Totten requisition for groceries and provisions, Summer 1868; JAS-MNHS.

¹¹⁴ Barbour, *Fort Union and the Upper Missouri Fur Trade*, 219.

¹¹⁵ Richardson, *Memories*, 6.

dealings, having provided sub-standard food to starving Indians, for example, and it's unlikely his approach changed.¹¹⁶ In one case, a manufacturer hired to produce pipes suggested unused stock was written off, then sold. Contacting the Office of Indian Affairs about the matter, he referred to James as a "priestly and sanctimonious public robber."¹¹⁷ In another, the North West Fur Company billed the United States government for compensating Indian soldiers who had helped defend an outpost at rates that calculated to far more provisions than one man could consume in a day.¹¹⁸

The partnership was dissolved in 1869, as originally planned, but operations were to continue for a year so that stock could be liquidated with the cash shared among the partners after paying the company's debts.¹¹⁹ It actually took longer than that to settle their affairs.¹²⁰

James continued to look for potentially lucrative entrepreneurial opportunities and in 1870 he and his sons, Frank and William, were exploring the possibility of having an improved water meter adopted by the City of New York. They co-owned the patent with the inventor.¹²¹

Moving to Prairie Avenue

In 1866, James and Marcia purchased two adjoining parcels of land on Prairie Avenue, one in each of their names.¹²² Marcia's property included a large house which offered a view of Lake Michigan in a neighborhood that would soon become home to a number of Chicago's upper-class families including the Pullmans and the Fields.

In 1867, all of James' sons were living at 902 Prairie Avenue. The household included Charles B., who was nearing forty, with his wife Martha and two-year-old son Wallace; Frank M., who had just entered his thirties, with his wife Sephora; and William Wirt, who was in his late twenties, newly wed to his wife Susan. By 1870, Frank and William were living elsewhere, but grandchildren Cornelia and Louise were in residence along with James, Marcia, Charles, Sephora, Wallace, a coachman, four servants, and two

¹¹⁶ Barbour, *Fort Union and the Upper Missouri Fur Trade*, 219-220.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 233; citing undated declaration and transcript of treaty talks by A. B. Smith, Smith Papers, MnHS.

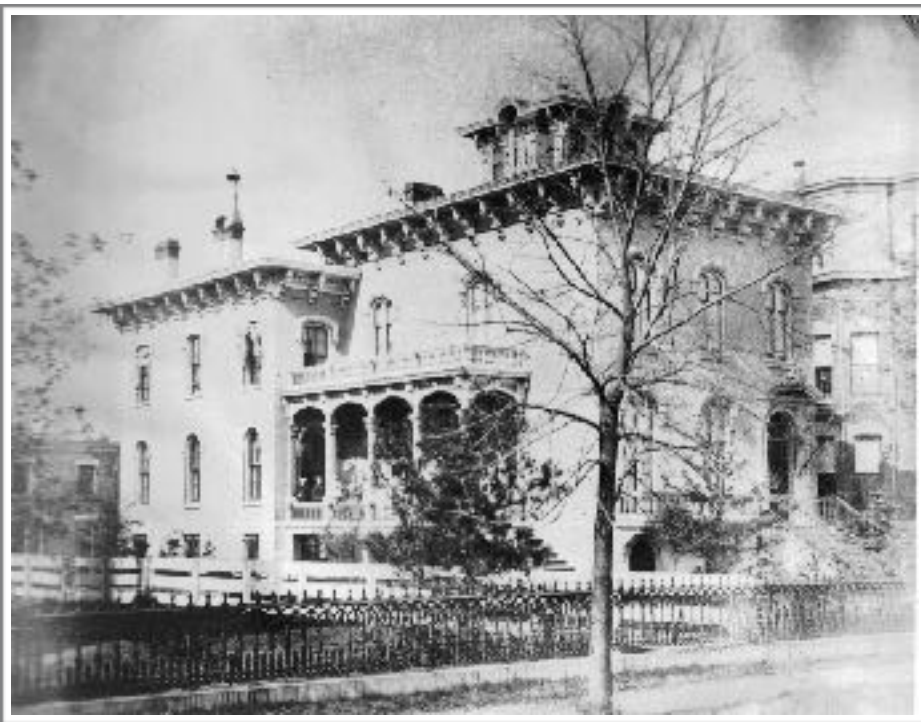
¹¹⁸ *United States Senate Report No. 337*, 41st Congress, 3d Session, dated 1 February 1871; JAS-MNHS. This document suggests the Northwestern Fur Company submitted a bill for "payment of Indian Soldiers" at Fort Union which exaggerated actual expenditures.

¹¹⁹ Agreement between C. Francis Bates, James B. Hubbell, and James A. Smith & Co, signed 9 May 1869; JAS-MNHS.

¹²⁰ See, for example, letter of C. F. Bates (New York) to "Charley" [Charles B. Smith] dated 16 March 1872; JAS-MNHS.

¹²¹ Agreement signed by James A. Smith, Willard M. Fuller, William W. Smith, Frank M. Smith and H. M. Williams, 25 November 1870; JAS-MNHS.

¹²² Summary of 902 Prairie ownership prepared by Bill Tyre, 2003; copy in possession of author.



The home located at 902 Prairie Avenue, taken after the Smiths lived there. Undated photo from Louise Richardson's self-published book *Memories*. Copy in possession of the author.

boarders.¹²³ Two years later, Frank and William had moved back. The Smith's youngest grandchild, William's daughter Edna Valentine, who would grow up to be appointed Chicago's first archivist, was born at the "family homestead" in 1873.¹²⁴

Louise remembered the house fondly, describing the parlor as "beautifully furnished in rosewood furniture upholstered in red satin brocade" with "a heavy velvet carpet of large floral design" and walls "frescoed with flowers and cupids." She also recalled two "white marble mantles," "large gold framed mirrors," "a Steinway piano," a library featured a "wall from floor to ceiling entirely filled with books," a croquet set on the front lawn, and a billiard room where her uncles relaxed with friends.¹²⁵

¹²³ 1870 U. S. census, Cook County, Illinois, population schedule, Chicago, 4th Ward, Chicago Post Office, p. 223 (penned), dwelling 1481, family 1632, James A. Smith household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-XCMC-9G9?i=223&cc=1438024>); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, Roll 200; United States Census, 1870 > Illinois > Cook > Chicago, ward 04 > image 224 of 309.

¹²⁴

¹²⁵ Richardson, *Memories*, 9-10.

In her family history Louise quotes an unsourced newspaper account of a reception held at the home, probably on 29 December 1868:

One of the largest and most brilliant receptions of the season was given at the residence of Jas. A. Smith, Esq., 902 Prairie Avenue, on Tuesday evening. Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Frank M. Smith, and Mr. and Mrs. Will W. Smith all received their friends at the parental mansion, which was admirably adapted to the occasion, with its grand parlors and halls. The Attendance was remarkably large, quite 300 ladies and gentlemen being present, and included more of the old residents of the city than any other private entertainment of the season, unless that of Mr. Hubbard some time ago, as Mr. J. A. Smith, himself is one of the Chicago pioneers. The evening was equally remarkable for the many brilliant toilettes worn by the ladies. Social conversation, enlivened by operatic selections played by Vass, with some other musicians, occupied the time until the supper hour, after which the rooms were considerably thinned out and dancing began. The supper was elaborate, the table containing unusually handsome ornaments, was prepared in Kingsley's best style, and was said to be the best of all the season. All the other arrangements were similarly excellent, and the entertainment will long be remembered pleasantly by all who were present.¹²⁶

The Great Chicago Fire

In October 1871, the Great Chicago Fire destroyed James' business but left the Prairie Avenue home untouched.¹²⁷ A family history recounts the night in this way:

On that night of terror, Mr. Smith's coachman called his attention to the glow of what seemed a big fire down town. The household went up into the cupola from which an extensive view was attainable and saw that quite a fire was raging.

Mr. Smith being apprehensive, ordered the light wagon made ready and he and the coachman drove down town and they began [*sic*] at once moving valuables and furs. They worked all night making three moves and lastly took their stock from the lake front, where they were left temporarily, to the family residence where \$40,000.00 worth were saved.¹²⁸

In the aftermath, insurance adjustors compared the firm's records with an inventory of rescued goods and estimated James A. Smith & Co.'s loss to be \$36,183.42.¹²⁹ The business was insured by policies from multiple companies.¹³⁰ However, because the damage was so extensive, city-wide

¹²⁶ Richardson, *Memories*, 11. The quoted article hints that James had close associations with early settlers stating his party "included more of the old residents of the city those than any other private entertainment of the season."

¹²⁷ "The James A. Smith Family in Chicago," 3; JAS-CHM.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Affidavit of loss signed by E. J. Bassett, H. B. Willworth, and I. J. Lewis, n.d.; JAS-MNHS.

¹³⁰ See, for example, bankruptcy notices to James A. Smith & Co., creditor, from The Western Insurance Company, The Buffalo Fire & Marine Insurance Company, Chicago Firemen's Insurance Company, Buffalo City Insurance Company; JAS-MNHS.

losses overwhelmed the resources and many companies filed for bankruptcy and paid only a percentage on claims.¹³¹

The End of an Era

By November 1871, James had reopened the business at 513 Wabash Avenue and was advertising "The Largest and Finest Stock in the West" including hats, caps, and furs.¹³² Two years later he established a new store and "manufactory" at 161 State Street "two doors north of the Palmer House," but kept the Wabash location to serve the needs of south-side customers.¹³³

A 7 June 1875 classified advertisement offering a "choice location for hats and caps; formerly occupied by J. A. Smith & Co." for rent hinted that the business might be downsizing or closing but a 17 June newspaper included a display advertisement for summer hats "In all Shades of Color and Price."¹³⁴ The store was still open for business.

Five days later, on 22 July 1875, James died of Bright's disease [kidney disease] at his home on Prairie Avenue at the age of sixty-eight. He was buried in the family plot at Rosehill Cemetery.¹³⁵

With James' death "The Oldest Permanent Business Firm in Chicago" was no more.¹³⁶

Children of James¹ Ayer Smith and Marcia Mahala Swetland:

- + 2 i. CHARLES² BENJAMIN SMITH, probably born 18 October 1829 in Binghamton, Broome County, New York;¹³⁷ christened 9 July 1831;¹³⁸ died 21 March 1908 in Chicago;¹³⁹ He married

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Richard Edwards, editor, *Edwards' Annual Director ... City of Chicago, for 1872* (Chicago: Richard Edwards, 1872), 869, entry for J. A. Smith & Co.; digital image, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/2469/4528793>).

¹³³ Display advertisement for J. A. Smith & Co., *The Inter Ocean (Chicago, Illinois)*, 21 June 1873, p. 1, col. 7; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/clip/21135299>).

¹³⁴ Display advertisement for J. A. Smith & Co., *The Chicago Tribune*, 7 June 1873, p. 1, col. 6; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/21136267>). Display advertisement for J. A. Smith & Co., *The Inter Ocean (Chicago, Illinois)*, 17 June 1875, p. 1, col. 5; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/35069100>).

¹³⁵ Rosehill Cemetery Office (Chicago, Illinois), plat record, int. no. 9402, James A. Smith.

¹³⁶ Display advertisement, J. A. Smith & Co, *The Inter Ocean*, 21 July 1873, p. 1, col. 7; *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/?spot=21135299>).

¹³⁷ "Charles Benjamin Smith, Pioneer of Chicago, Dies," *The Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 22 March 1908, section II, part I, [E2], col. 2; *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/350247922>).

¹³⁸ "U.S., Presbyterian Church Records, 1701-1970," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61048>) > New York > Binghamton > First Presbyterian Church > Records > 1817-1837 > image 382 of 416; household of James A. & Marcia Smith.

¹³⁹ Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 17087 (21 March 1908), Charles B. Smith; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-DBGQ-7KW?i=255&cat=42925>) > "Chicago death certificates, 1878-1915" > microfilm 1239794 > image 256 of 1699.



Marcia Mahala Swetland Smith and James Ayer Smith. Undated photos from Louise Richardson's self-published book *Memories*. Copy in possession of the author.

- before 27 April 1861 Martha Jane Stewart,¹⁴⁰ daughter of Alanson Carpenter Stewart and Sabina Wallace.¹⁴¹
- 3 ii. JULIUS² SMITH, born about 9 March 1830 in Binghamton;¹⁴² christened and died 9 July 1831, same place.¹⁴³
- 4 iii. HENRY² SMITH, christened 27 March 1832 in Binghamton;¹⁴⁴ died 3 April 1832, same place.

¹⁴⁰ "Married," C. B. Smith and Mattie J. Stewart, *Chicago Evening Journal*, 27 April 1861, p. 6, col. 2; digital image from microfilm, Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* Announcement reads "Mattie J., daughter of A. C. Stewart, Esq., of Evanston, Ill." Also, Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 32312 (3 December 1920), Martha Stewart Smith; digital image from FHL microfilm 1852950, Wilmette Illinois Family History Center. For Stewart-Wallace marriage, see "Marriage records 1808-1917, Portage County, Ohio," *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/454220>) > Marriage records, v. 1, 1808-1841 > image 217 of 664; citing Portage County, Ohio, marriage records, v. 1, 455, entry for Alanson C. Stewart and Sabina Wallace, 30 Jan 1827.

¹⁴² "U.S., Presbyterian Church Records, 1701-1970," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61048>) > New York > Binghamton > First Presbyterian Church > Records > 1817-1837 > image 409 of 416; deaths, Julius of James A. & Marcia Smith. Age at death (1 y. 4 m.) calculates to a 9 March 1830 date.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ "U.S., Presbyterian Church Records, 1701-1970," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61048>) > New York > Binghamton > First Presbyterian Church > Records > 1817-1837 > image 382 of 416; household of James A. & Marcia Smith.

- + 5 iv. JAMES² THOMAS SMITH, born about 8 July 1833, possibly in Waterville, Oneida County, New York;¹⁴⁵ died 18 February 1863 in Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan.¹⁴⁶ He married 18 September 1856 in Peoria, Peoria County, Illinois Margaretta Ballinger Grant,¹⁴⁷ daughter of David Miller Grant and Marietta Gulick.¹⁴⁸
- + 6 v. FRANCIS² MARION "FRANK" SMITH, probably born 1836 in Chicago;¹⁴⁹ died 13 October 1899, same place.¹⁵⁰ He married Bridget Sephora Cicotte,¹⁵¹ daughter of Edward Vincent Cicotte and Lucretia Ann Abbott.¹⁵²
- + 7 vi. WILLIAM² WIRT SMITH, born April 1839 in Chicago;¹⁵³ died 16 January 1903, same place.¹⁵⁴ He married 14 February 1867 in Chicago, Mary Susan Farnsworth,¹⁵⁵ daughter of Benjamin Stow Farnsworth and Eliza Fiske Valentine.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁵ "Died," Mr. Thos. Smith, *The Free Press (Detroit, Michigan)*, 19 February 1863, p. 2, col. 4; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/118137465/>). Birth date calculated from age at death (29 years, 7 months, and 10 days). Also Rosehill Cemetery Office (Chicago, Illinois), plat record, int. no. 3195, James T. Smith (age 31). The age on the two records conflicts. The precise age published in the newspaper likely came from Thomas' wife and the source of the age on the plat record is unknown. The latter would have been recorded when Thomas was interred which was at least five months after his death.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Peoria County, Illinois, marriage license, Smith-Grant (1856); County Clerk's Office, Peoria.
¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁹ Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 18070 (13 October 1899), Francis M. Smith; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-D1H1-N5?i=1264&cat=42925>) > "Chicago death certificates, 1878-1915" > microfilm 1033071 > image 1265 of 1821. Birth date calculated from age at death (63).

¹⁵⁰ Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 18070 (13 October 1899), Francis M. Smith; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-D1H1-N5?i=1264&cat=42925>) > "Chicago death certificates, 1878-1915" > microfilm 1033071 > image 1265 of 1821.

¹⁵¹ "Married," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 23 September 1863, p. 4, col. 8; digital image, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/43/80089807>). [Copy of original marriage record has been requested from the church.]

¹⁵² "U.S., French Catholic Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1695-1954," *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/1111/d13p_32280156?pid=33845) > D > Detroit, Ste-Anne 1801-1842 > image 963 of 1081, p. 3472, baptismal entry for Bridget Sephora.

¹⁵³ Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 18955 (16 January 1903), William Wirt Smith; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6LX9-DV7?i=1360&cat=42925>) > "Chicago death certificates, 1878-1915," microfilm 1239691 > image 1361 of 1746. Also 1900 U. S. census, Cook County, Illinois, population schedule, Chicago City, South Town, Enumeration District (ED) 98, sheet 4-B, house numbers 3804-3800, William W. Smith; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>); citing NARA microfilm publication T623 [no roll # stated]. Birth date calculated from age at death (63 years 9 months -- days).

¹⁵⁴ Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 18955 (16 January 1903), William Wirt Smith.

¹⁵⁵ "Married," *Chicago Tribune*, 18 February 1867, [p. 4], col. 7; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/349533508/>).

¹⁵⁶ Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 20548 (13 July 1926), Mary Susan Farnsworth Smith; digital image from FHL microfilm 1877848, Wilmette Illinois Family History Center. The informant was daughter Valentine Smith who, as an avid family historian, would likely have known her mother's parents' names.

- 8 vii. CORNELIA² MARCIA SMITH, born 11 June 1845 Chicago;¹⁵⁷
died of dropsy 25 March 1853, same place.¹⁵⁸
- 9 viii. CORNELIUS² SMITH, died as infant.¹⁵⁹

Generation Two

2. **Charles² Benjamin Smith**, probably born 18 October 1828 in Binghamton, Broome County, New York;¹⁶⁰ christened 9 July 1831;¹⁶¹ died 21 March 1908 in Chicago;¹⁶² He married before 27 April 1861 Martha Jane Stewart,¹⁶³ daughter of Alanson Carpenter Stewart and Sabina Wallace.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁷ "Died," Cornelia Marcia, daughter of Jas. A. and Maria [*sic*] M. Smith, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 March 1853, p. 2, col. 5; *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/43/80105197>). Birth date calculated from age at death (7 years 9 months and 14 days).

¹⁵⁸ "Died," Cornelia Marcia, daughter of Jas. A. and Maria [*sic*] M. Smith, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 March 1853, p. 2, col. 5. Also Rosehill Cemetery Office (Chicago, Illinois), plat record, int. no. 3196, Marcia C. Smith.

¹⁵⁹ *American Ancestry: Giving the Name and Descent, in the Male Line, of Americans Whose Ancestors Settled in the United States Previous to the Declaration of Independence, A. D. 1776, Vol. IX* (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1894, 132; digital image, *Google Books* (<https://books.google.com/books>)). Also see Cook County, Illinois, probate file no. 4-2790 (1885) for Marcia M. Smith, Proof of Heirship document; Cook County Circuit Court Archives, Chicago. The infant is mentioned as a deceased child, but not named.

¹⁶⁰ "Charles Benjamin Smith, Pioneer of Chicago, Dies," *The Chicago Sunday Tribune*, 22 March 1908, section II, part I, [E2], col. 2; *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/350247922>).

¹⁶¹ "U.S., Presbyterian Church Records, 1701-1970," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=61048>) > New York > Binghamton > First Presbyterian Church > Records > 1817-1837 > image 382 of 416; household of James A. & Marcia Smith.

¹⁶² Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 17087 (21 March 1908), Charles B. Smith; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-DBGQ-7KW?i=255&cat=42925>) > "Chicago death certificates, 1878-1915" > microfilm 1239794 > image 256 of 1699.

¹⁶³ "Married," C. B. Smith and Mattie J. Stewart, *Chicago Evening Journal*, 27 April 1861, p. 6, col. 2; digital image from microfilm, Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Announcement reads "Mattie J., daughter of A. C. Stewart, Esq., of Evanston, Ill." Also, Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 32312 (3 December 1920), Martha Stewart Smith; digital image from FHL microfilm 1852950, Wilmette Illinois Family History Center. For Stewart-Wallace marriage, see "Marriage records 1808-1917, Portage County, Ohio," *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/454220>) > Marriage records, v. 1, 1808-1841 > image 217 of 664; citing Portage County, Ohio, marriage records, v. 1, 455, entry for Alanson C. Stewart and Sabina Wallace, 30 Jan 1827.

- 33 i. WALLACE STEWART SMITH, born about August 1864, probably in Chicago or Evanston;¹⁶⁵ died 3 April 1871, Chicago.¹⁶⁶
- 34 ii. MERTON S. SMITH, probably born late May 1868;¹⁶⁷ died probably August 1868, Evanston, Cook County, Illinois.¹⁶⁸

5. **James² Thomas Smith** born about 8 July 1833, possibly in Waterville, Oneida County, New York;¹⁶⁹ died 18 February 1863 in Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan.¹⁷⁰ He married 18 September 1856 in Peoria, Peoria County, Illinois **Margaretta Ballinger Grant** daughter of David Miller Grant and Marietta Gulick.¹⁷¹

- 35 i. CORNELIA³ SMITH, probably born 9 September 1857 in Chicago;¹⁷² died 7 January 1929, Ambler, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.¹⁷³
- + 36 ii. LOUISE³ GRANT SMITH, born 1 April 1861, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan;¹⁷⁴ died 1 May 1941, Geneva, Ashtabula

¹⁶⁵ "Died," Wallie Stewart Smith, *The Chicago Tribune*, 5 April 1871, p. 4, col. 4; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/349748286/>). Birth month and year calculated from age at death (6 years and 8 months). Wallace's father, Charles Smith, is listed in Chicago city directories for 1862, 1862, and 1864; Wallace was probably born in Chicago but may have been born in Evanston where his mother's family lived. For the family residence, see T. M. Halpin, *Halpin & Bailey's Chicago City Directory For the Year 1862—63...*, (Chicago: Halpin & Bailey, 1862), 420; *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/2469/dvm_lochist005482-00001_0#?imgid=4507956). And T. M. Halpin, *Halpin & Bailey's Chicago City Directory For the Year 1863-64...*, (Chicago: Halpin & Bailey, 1863), 518; *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/2469/dvm_lochist005482-00001_0#?imgid=4510375). And John W. C. Bailey, *John C. W. Bailey's Chicago City Directory, For the Year 1864—5*: (Chicago: John C. W. Bailey, 1864), 588; *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/2469/dvm_lochist005482-00001_0#?imgid=4535129).

¹⁶⁶ "Died," Wallie Stewart Smith, *The Chicago Tribune*, 4 April 1871, p. 4, col. 5; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/349748239/>).

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* Approximate date calculated from age at death (10 weeks) given in death notice.

¹⁶⁸ "Died," Merton S., infant son of Charles B. and Mattie J. Smith, *Chicago Tribune*, 3 August 1868, [p. 4], col. 6; digital image, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/43/84474108>).

¹⁶⁹ See note #129.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Peoria County, Illinois, marriage license, Smith-Grant (1856); County Clerk's Office, Peoria.

¹⁷² Richardson, *Memories*, 5. And Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, death certificate no. 10791 (1929), Cornelia Smith, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Health, New Castle. The day given in the family history written by her sister Louise conflicts with the day given by her half-brother-in-law on her death certificate. Louise grew up with Cornelia and remained in contact with her throughout her life; she is most likely the more reliable informant. See, for example, 1920 U. S. census, Erie County, Pennsylvania, population schedule, Millcreek, Enumeration District (ED) 413282, sheet 11B, dwelling 247, family 289, Cornelia M. Smith and dwelling 248, family 290, Louise G. Richardson; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/pal:MM9.3.1/TH-1951-22938-14739-40?cc=1488411>); citing National Archives microfilm publication T625, roll 1567.

¹⁷³ Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, death certificate no. 10791 (1929), Cornelia Smith.

¹⁷⁴ Richardson, *Memories*, 5.

County, Ohio.¹⁷⁵ She married 7 April 1885, Peoria, Peoria County, Illinois, Allan Chapman Richardson,¹⁷⁶ son of James Arnold Richardson and Sarah Rogers Merryman.¹⁷⁷

7. **William² Wirt Smith**, born April 1839, Chicago;¹⁷⁸ died 16 January 1903, same place.¹⁷⁹ He married 14 February 1867 in Detroit, **Mary Susan Farnsworth**,¹⁸⁰ daughter of Benjamin Stow Farnsworth and Eliza Fiske Valentine.¹⁸¹

37 i. **EDNA³ VALENTINE SMITH**, born 22 June 1873, Chicago;¹⁸² died 18 January 1944, Manteno, Kankakee County, Illinois.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁵ Ashtabula County, Ohio, death certificate no. 27907, registered no. 119 (1941), Louisa Grant Smith; State of Ohio, Department of Health, Columbus.

¹⁷⁶ Peoria County, Illinois, marriage license issued 13 April 1885 and return of a marriage, Allen C. Richardson and Louise G. Smith; Peoria County Clerk, Peoria.

¹⁷⁷ Peoria County, Illinois, marriage return, Richardson-Smith, 14 April 1885; Peoria County Clerk. Parental information almost certainly provided by Allen who would have known his parents' names. Also Erie County, Pennsylvania, death certificate no. 113560, registered no. 1154 (21 December 1908), Allen Chapman Richardson; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Health, New Castle. The informant was son Roland Richardson who likely knew his father's parents' names.

¹⁷⁸ Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 18955 (16 January 1903), William Wirt Smith; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6LX9-DV7?i=1360&cat=42925>) > "Chicago death certificates, 1878-1915," microfilm 1239691 > image 1361 of 1746. Also 1900 U. S. census, Cook County, Illinois, population schedule, Chicago City, South Town, Enumeration District (ED) 98, sheet 4-B, house numbers 3804-3800, William W. Smith; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>); citing NARA microfilm publication T623 [no roll # stated]. Birth date calculated from age at death (63 years 9 months -- days).

¹⁷⁹ Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 18955 (16 January 1903), William Wirt Smith.

¹⁸⁰ "Married," *Chicago Tribune*, 18 February 1867, [p. 4], col. 7; digital image, *Newspapers* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/349533508/>).

¹⁸¹ Cook County, Illinois, death certificate no. 20548 (13 July 1926), Mary Susan Farnsworth Smith; digital image from FHL microfilm 1877848, Wilmette Illinois Family History Center. The informant was daughter Valentine Smith who, as an avid family historian, would likely have known her mother's parents' names.

¹⁸² Cook County, Illinois, Chicago birth register, v. B, p. 132, entry for "Smith" born to William W. Smith and Mary S. Farnsworth; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-6423-J4H>) "Chicago death certificates, 1878-1915," > microfilm 1287720 > image 361 of 369.

¹⁸³ Kankakee County, Illinois, death certificate no. 2153 (1944), Valentine Smith; Illinois Department of Public Health, Springfield.