



Address to
Seventh Family Reunion

Held in

ODD FELLOWS' HALL

LAWNSIDE, N. J.

September 25th, 1921



A
929.2
S641



CHARLES C. SMILEY,
President Smiley Family

HONORED GUEST,
AUNTS, UNCLES, COUSINS—ALL;

GREETING:—

I bid you welcome. I am about to place in your keeping the record of our Father's Family to the fourth generation. Which I shall ask you to cherish, reverence and sacredly guard. I shall also request of you to teach it to your children, that they may know from where we came to aid them in higher achievements.

Coming from Virginia to New Jersey, in 1840, our forefathers soon established themselves and families. Great Grandfather Jimmy Smiley, an aged man settled on a spot in the present Borough of Westmont, N. J., the old name was Requantown, also Egypt. He was very much interested in the spiritual welfare of his people, he fitted up a grove beside his home and called all the neighbors together for worship on the Sabbath. He was ably assisted by Great Grandmother Amey, who was also aged. There is a slight record of their labors in the record of the First M. E. Church, of Haddonfield, N. J. Their home was a three-room house on one and one-half acres of land well kept. Great Grandfather Jimmy willed his home to his granddaughters, who came with him from Virginia. Grandmother Judith, his daughter saw that this was carried out.

When she became old she called her daughters in council and they decided to sell the property, which brought \$300.00. Mr. Samuel White was the purchaser. At the settlement this \$300.00 was equally divided between Aunts Charlotte, Emerline, Eliza, Francis, Sarah and Amelia. Great Grandfather Isam and his wife Sarah were the parents of Grandfather Christopher Smiley. They did not come to New Jersey, but went to a western state, with them went Grandfather's sister Venus and her children. Those born in Virginia were named: Margaret, Betsy, Lewis and Isham. I have been told that there was twenty-five persons in this emancipation, which was a glad day, but sad for some of Grandfather's near kin who belonged to his master's sister and was not liberated. His father, mother and sister went in a different direction and was never heard from or seen by him again.

Grandfather Christopher, called "Kit", and Grandmother Judith settled on the Sorrel Horse Road, near Jordantown, now Pensauken, N. J. They were farmers, their home was a seven-room house, three upstairs, four down, a well of water in the shed, a barn and six acres of ground, title clear. They were members of Mt. Pisgah A. M. E. Church, Snow Hill, now Lawnside, N. J.

Grandfather Christopher was a charter member of the "Bene-

ficial Society Sons of Isreal Scott" and was their treasurer from January 3, 1850 to March 12, 1867.

Home instructions to the children was to be courteous and industrious, everyone had a portion of the work to perform—no child was allowed to lie or steal, and stealing then meant to pick up or take anything which did not belong to one, Grandfather Christopher was interested in the education of his children. Josiah Polk and Grandfather with the assistance of others arranged with William Polk to teach the first school in Jordantown; a pay school.

Grandmother Judith Smiley, died December 30, 1875. Grandfather Christopher Smiley, died February 27, 1884.

I will now consider the third generation. Grandfather and Grandmother Christopher and Judith Smiley had twenty children named: 1, Alfred; 2, Charlotte; 3, Mary; 4, Emerline; 5, James; 6, Cheri Francis; 7, Eliza; 8, Martha Rebecca; 9, Julia; 10, Sarah; 11, Amelia; 12, Thomas; 13, Christopher; 14, Peter Simon; 15, Isaac; 16, William; 17, Annie; 18, Edward; 19, John Henry; 20, Samuel. Of these ten married, nine had families. Edward's is the only complete family left, (1921). There are now living two sisters, two brothers and one brother's widow; Edward and Elizabeth Smiley, Peter S. Smiley, Francis Polk, Sarah Butler and Amy L. Smiley.

1. Christopher married Annie Smiley. He was a councillor who all the brothers and sisters respected, he being the eldest brother and lived at Deep Cut, now East Side, Camden, in a nice home.

2. Charlotte married Hiram Polk. She was a mother in Pensauken Church, serving faithful and well, her positions leaving a family highly respected by church and state. She died September 4, 1898. She had eight children, named: 1, Emma; 2, Ella; 3, Charles Henry; 4, Isaac Christopher; 5, Sarah Jane; 6, Charlotte Rebecca; 7, Margaret; 8, Anna Louisa.

3. Emerline married William Jackson. She was interested in the social affairs of her home town, Snow Hill, a member of the St. Matthew's Union Lodge, No. 10, Good Samaritains and Daughters of Samaria, also a temperance worker. She served her church loyally, at the time of her death she was a deaconess. She was a noble character and was called Auntie Jackson by all Lawnside. She had two sons, William and Thomas. Emerline Jackson died May 2, 1919.

4. Mary married William Sorden and lived at Sordentown. She was an honored member of Pensauken Church. She had one child, named Julia.

5. Cheri Francis married William Polk, March 20, 1857. We have now our oldest living aunt, who has been in business as manager of a laundry, owned two homes, was a charter member of H. H. of Ruth, No. 69, of Lawnside, a member of Ebenezer

Mann Beneficial Society, (now extinct), a honored and respected Christian lady, with a number of brilliant children and grand children. She is a widow and had ten children, named: 1, Hiram A.; 2, Frances Ann; 3, Charles Elsey; 4, William; 5-6, Twin sisters, Julia Emma and Clara Elizabeth; 7-8, Twin brothers, James Steven and Marvin H.; 9, Sarah Ella; 10, Joseph Christopher.

6. Eliza married Henry Hamming. She lived in Haddonfield, N. J., was a member of Mt. Pisgah A. M. E. Church, Snow Hill. Strong, firm and a wonderful example of fidelity and courage. Aunt Eliza died February 18, 1886. She had nine children, named: 1, Sallie; 2, Cornelia; 3, Henry; 4, Annie; 5, Christopher; 6, Laura; 7, Hettie; 8, Hannah; 9, Eliza.

7. Sarah married Henry Butler. They lived in Pensauken, the old name was Jordantown. Aunt Sarah is a mother in the Church and community, she has a wonderful memory, her advice is of the best, for it is honest, reliable and confident. She is a widow and has had six children, named: 1, James Henry; 2, Howard H.; 3, John E.; 4, Lillian L.; 5, Charlotte Anna; 6, Julia.

8. Peter S. married Mary Sadler. Our oldest living uncle has served Public School Board with honor. While he was a member of this Board the Public School children purchased their bell. A member of Star of Liberty O. F., for over 50 years, a high officer and trustee and hall steward. A F. A. M. member of long standing. He has served Mt. Pisgah A. M. E. Church, Lawnside, N. J., as trustee, steward, class leader, Sunday School Superintendent and sexton. He worked as a farmer until he built a store at Lawnside. At one time he was the most well known man in Lawnside, N. J. He is now a widower and has had five children, named: 1, Alfred; 2, Mary; 3, Francis A.; 4, John; 5, Joshua.

9. Edward married Elizabeth Clawson. He lives in Haddonfield, where he is honored and respected. He is an O. F. Lodge member, a home-loving man interested that his children be educated; he has a kindly interest in his neighbor's child also. He was Sunday School superintendent a number of years, he is also an ordained deacon and a charter member as it were of Mt. Pisgah A. M. E. Church, Haddonfield, N. J., he was in at its beginning. They are blessed to be the only complete family of the third generation (by complete I mean to contain father, mother and child). They had seven children, named: 1, Sarah J.; 2, Racheal; 3, Lillian; 4-5, Twins; 7, Julia; 8, Paul; 9, Etta.

10. John H. married Amy L. Selby, January 3, 1884. This is the youngest uncle and last to start a family. He was highly respected in Haddonfield and Snow Hill. An O. F. and A. P. A. member, one of the founders of Mt. Pisgah A. M. E. Church,

Haddonfield, which he served faithful as class leader, trustee and steward. He was on his way to Church and had reached the vestibule when stricken with his death sickness. Children everywhere loved him. He was a loving father and saw that the Mt. Pisgah Sunday School got a Christmas treat yearly. He died April 23, 1913. He had three children, named: 1, Charles Christopher; 2, Anna Elizabeth; 3, Clarence Franklin.

Before we talk of the Fourth Generation, I wish to call your attention to the family of Grandfather Christopher Smiley's brother Peter and wife, Christianna, who located with and near us. I am not familiar with the early history of this family for I have never seen their records, but I know of three children: Harrison, George and Mary.

1. Harrison Smiley settled in West Philadelphia.

2. George married Elizabeth Quann and lived at Jordantown, now Pensauken. He was a scholar in his day, being a school teacher in the old Jordantown school. He took pride and interest in the civic, social and religious development of his home village. He was present at our first reunion and gave us his approval and encouragement. He died July 27, 1915. He had seven children, named: 1, Hettie; 2, Walter; 3, Mary; 4, Francis; 5, Joseph Christopher; 6, Harrison; 7, Arthur.

3. Mary married Levick Anderson and lived at Snow Hill. She was a worker in Mt. Pisgah A. M. E. Church. She provided the best education and training for her children. Her oldest daughter was second church organist. She had three children, named; 1, Laura; 2, Ida M.; 3, Cora. Mary Anderson died February 9, 1892.

Now there are so many in the fourth generation of Great Grandfather Jimmy Smiley's family. I will use but a few examples.

William K. Polk, Jr., graduated from the Institute for Colored Youths, Philadelphia, Pa., June 30, 1886, and became an educator in the states of Maryland and Virginia; graduated from Wilberforce University, Xenia, Ohio, June 15, 1893, as Bachelor of Divinity. Entered the Ministry in Ohio and died on his first visit home. Death overtook him crossing the Delaware River.

The others I shall name I will speak briefly of. Harry Butler, Justice of Peace, fraternal brother, Sunday School superintendent and an advocate of right living. Anna Hamming James, a Sunday School worker of note. Julia Smiley Hart, a Church and Sunday School worker. Anna L. Polk and Charles C. Smiley, are also good examples.

We can say that for four generations of the Smiley family, New Jersey has not had to build a jail or reformatory. This great Commonwealth has had to provide institutions of learning and places of religious worship, also an honorable way to make a liv-

ing—never yet have we brought disgrace to this Commonwealth.

We have produced honorable and upright men and women. In every generation we produced a leader for good living and Christ-like principles. Have we not paid for our early emancipation? It is now 1921 and very soon we shall have been a free people 100 years. We owe our fathers a leader and a better developed people. Let us try and encourage the children to matriculate in the various professions so that in 1939 when we have been free from slavery 100 years we will be the most valuable family in New Jersey socially, financially and spiritually we are valuable now but we can become of more value. Remember you must take a place in life equal to the place your father or mother had in their day. Parents build wisely for your children's sake. Our parents chose the best things in life, they were always for advancement, not always will you find the name Smiley prominent for we in honor prefer another and are earnest workers.

The Smiley family's life is now an open book in which we offer no apologies, but the accomplishments and mistakes of our family generation by generation.

We have made mistakes, no one who has made anything of value has been successful but by mistakes and their lessons. We have achieved a degree of success. Let us build a wonderful monument—not out of marble for that must decay. Great Grandfather Jimmy was 65 years in slavery, the rest of us have been free from slavery 82 years. We have a parentage of 147 years, is that not large and broad enough for the foundation. In 1912 a few of us; Lillian Smiley, Eliza Hamming, Anna L. Polk, Anna Butler, C. C. Smiley and Francis A. White, thought it would be nice to come together as a family, with no sadness and get better acquainted, so we set September 22, 1912, as our first family reunion and Auntie Jackson's birthday party, we found it worked well so each year on the last Sunday in September, we held a reunion, with one exception.

The dates of the reunions were as follows:

2nd Reunion, September 28, 1913.

3rd Reunion, September 27, 1914.

4th Reunion, September 26, 1915.

5th—Owing to Infantile Paralysis quarantine, we held our reunion October 22, 1916.

6th Reunion, September 23, 1917. Then came the World's War and our seventh reunion was postponed until today.

Now we wish to add to our first conception of the reunion a review of accomplishments by the members of our family and encourage those who are studying or working on a problem, introducing our new relations, etc., in fact a revival of our program. This Seventh Reunion is as vital as the first and it remains with us

whether we shall have another and how shall it be conducted. I am nearing a conclusion but I wish to bring to your attention a commission that rests on me which I truly would like your help. Auntie Jackson, in April, 1919, when I last saw her and talked with her urged me to keep the family together and not let them scatter like wandering sheep. I am mindful to keep this request sacred and true. We can come together the last Sunday in September every year to record our advancement and greet each other until 1939. Shall we try? So shall we bless the sacred memory of our forefathers and near kinsfolk.

Now I wish to present you a correct copy of the will of Thomas Smelly, that part that refers to our foreparents, a copy of a transcript, their register numbers and record pages in Camden County Court House, that you may speak with authority when conversing of them.

"I, Thomas Smelly, of the County of Isle of Wight and State of Virginia, do make this writing my last will and testament in the following manner: to wit: 3rdly; I do hereby emancipate and set free my negro man Jim and negro woman Amey and give them one hundred dollars to be equally divided between them—4thly; I do hereby emancipate and set free my negro man Rit and woman Judiah, with their future increase, also I give them their children now born, to wit: Alfred, Charlotte, Mary, Amey, until they arrive at the age of twenty-one years, at which time the said children and their increase to be set free—5thly; I do hereby emancipate and set free my negro woman Venus and her future increase, also I give her all her children now born, to wit: Margaret, Betsy, Lewis and Isham, until they arrive at the age of twenty-one years, at which age the said children and their increase to be set free and emancipated—6thly; All the rest of my negroes slaves, I do hereby emancipate and set free after my decease and if that event should happen before the end of this year or any future year for all the said negroes to remain in my service, for the benefit of my estate until the end of the year after my decease—8thly; I do hereby authorize my executor to pay the expenses of my negroes emigration to where they may think proper to enjoy their freedom. In witness whereof I have herewith set my hand and seal this sixth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four (1834).

Signed sealed and delivered in the presence of:

WM. DEWS

THOS. SMELLY. (*Seal*)

WM. H. CHAPMAN

H. W. MURPHREY

At a court held for Isle of Wight County, the first day of October, 1838; the last will of Thos. Smelly, dec'd: The above

being a true copy of that part of said will relative to the emancipation of his slaves was presented in court by the executor therein named, proved by the oath of Wm. H. Chapman and Henry W. Murphrey, two of the witnesses thereto and ordered to be recorded.

Testo NATHL. I. YOUNG, Clk., I. W. C.

Register No. 1218. Virginia, Isle of Wight County

I hereby certify that the bearer hereof, Jimmy a negro man of dark brown complexion, five feet eight inches high, sixty-five years old, has a scar in his forehead and grey hair, was emancipated by Thomas Smelly, deceased, in his last will and testament which is of record in the Court of the aforesaid County and that the said Jimmy by order of said County Court made the fourth day of March, 1839, was registered in my office according to law.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of my said County this 23rd day of March, 1839.

(Seal) NATHL. I. YOUNG, I. W. C.

Countersigned: JOS. ELEY.

The transcript from the will of Thomas Smelly and the certificate of the clerk of Isle of Wight County, Virginia, rec'd Oct. 24th, A. D., 1850, and recorded in the Clerk's office of Camden County, at Camden in book of Miscellaneous Records, page 124.

B. BROWNING, Clerk.

Register No. 1219. Isle of Wight County, Va.

Amey, color, dark complexion, five feet six inches high, about fifty years of age.

Transcript of Thos. Smelly's will and certificate of the Clerk of the Isle of Wight County, Virginia, Rec'd Oct. 24th, A. D., 1850, and Recorded in the Clerk's office of Camden in Book of Miscellaneous Records, page 125.

B. BROWNING, Clerk.

Register No. 1226.

Judith, color, light complexion, five feet two inches high, age twenty-six years.

Transcript of Thos. Smelly's will and certificate of the Clerk of Isle of Wight County, Virginia. Rec'd Oct. 24, A. D., 1850, and Recorded in the Clerk's office of Camden County, New Jersey, at Camden in Book of Miscellaneous Records, page 127.

B. BROWNING, Clerk.

Register No. 1225.

Kit, age 31.

Transcript of Thomas Smelly's will with the certificate of the Clerk of Isle of Wight County, Virginia. Received Oct. 24th, A. D., 1850 and Recorded in the Clerk's office of Camden County, New Jersey, at Camden, in Book of Miscellaneous Records, page 126.

B. BROWNING, Clerk.

Now you have examined with me the record. How does your record compare with the persons we have been talking of? If you have not been serious before think on some noble achievement and accomplish it so you may have at least one glad and noble day in your life. Do not waste any time wondering why you were born. But get an inspiration and say within you and act.

For this Cause was I born.

Respectfully,

CHARLES C. SMILEY,

President Smiley Family.