



## James M. Wasson (1852-1884)

*James Wasson was the sixth of eight children born to John and Jemima Wasson.*

John and Jemima Wasson's son James was born about December 1852 in Amboy, Oswego County, New York. He moved to Jackson County, Iowa with his family in 1854, and then to Jones County, Iowa by 1860.

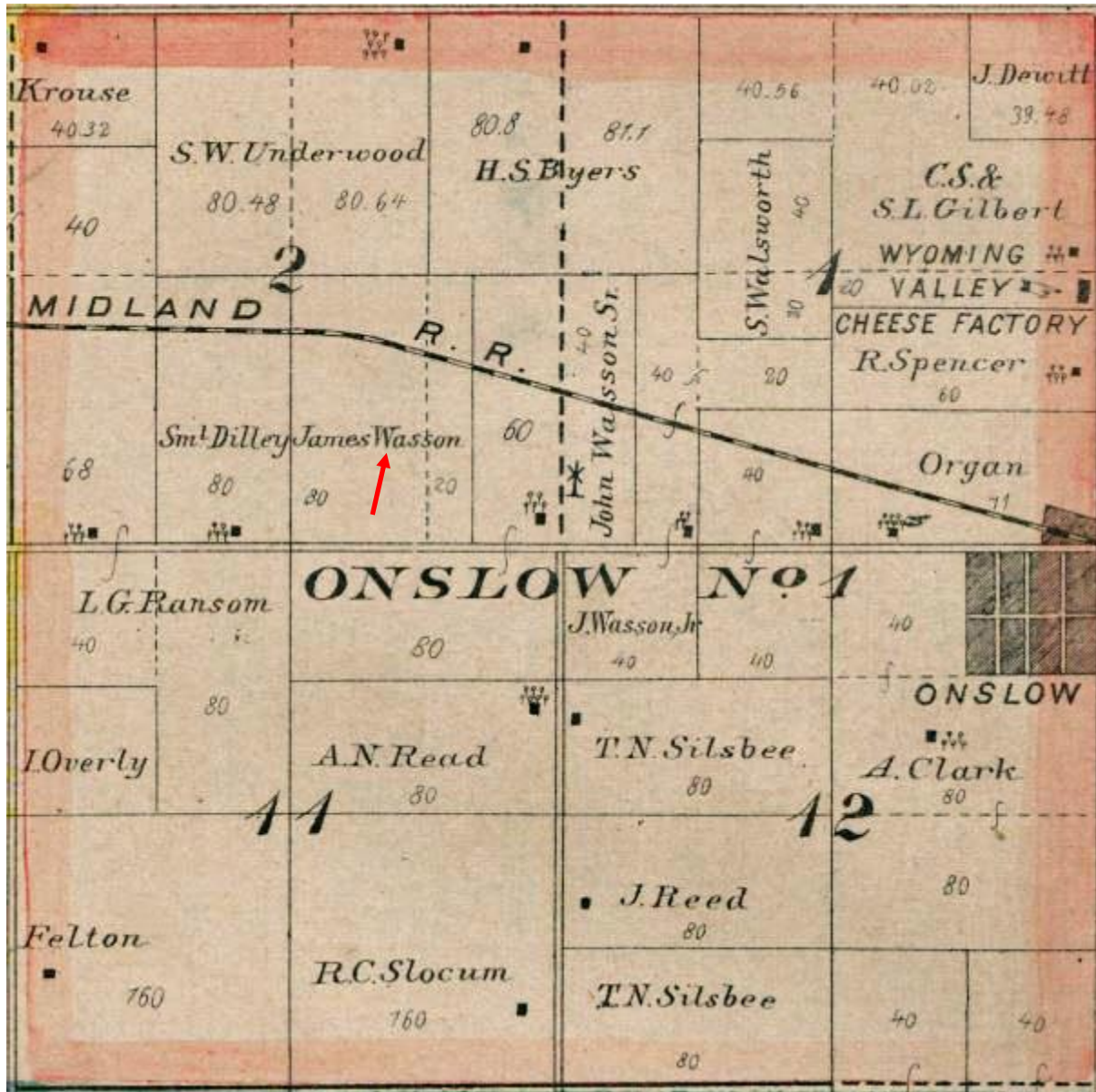
Like the rest of his family, James united with the Scotch Grove Presbyterian Church when the family moved to the area in 1854. In 1873, he then united with the Onslow Presbyterian Church.



*James Wasson (left); Mary Scoville and James Wasson (right)*

James married Mary Scoville on December 25, 1878. Mary was originally from Crogan, Lewis County, New York, and was the daughter of Henry L. Scoville and his wife Mary. I have found almost no information on the Scoville family.

James and Mary lived on James' farm immediately to the west of his parents' farm.



*This 1877 plat map shows James Wasson's farm. At that time, his farm consisted of 100 acres in section 2 of Madison Township, much of which had been carved out of his parents' farm next door. Likely by 1879, James had added the NW ¼ of the NE ¼ of section 11, Madison Township, 40 acres across the road that he had purchased from his parents.*



*Former site of the James Wasson Farm, along Highway E29 west of Onslow*



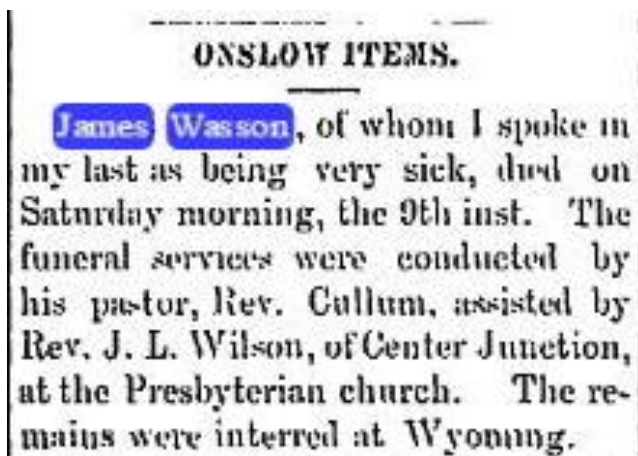
*Former site of the James Wasson Farm*

James and Mary had two children. Their first child was daughter Minnie Belle Wasson, who was born about December 1881.



*Minnie Belle Wasson*

Mary was pregnant with their second child when James took ill with inflammation of the bowels. James died February 9, 1884. He was buried in Wyoming Cemetery, Wyoming, Iowa.



*News of the death of James Wasson, Anamosa Eureka, February 21, 1884*

Daughter Mary "Mattie" Jeunelle Wasson was born a few months after her father passed away.



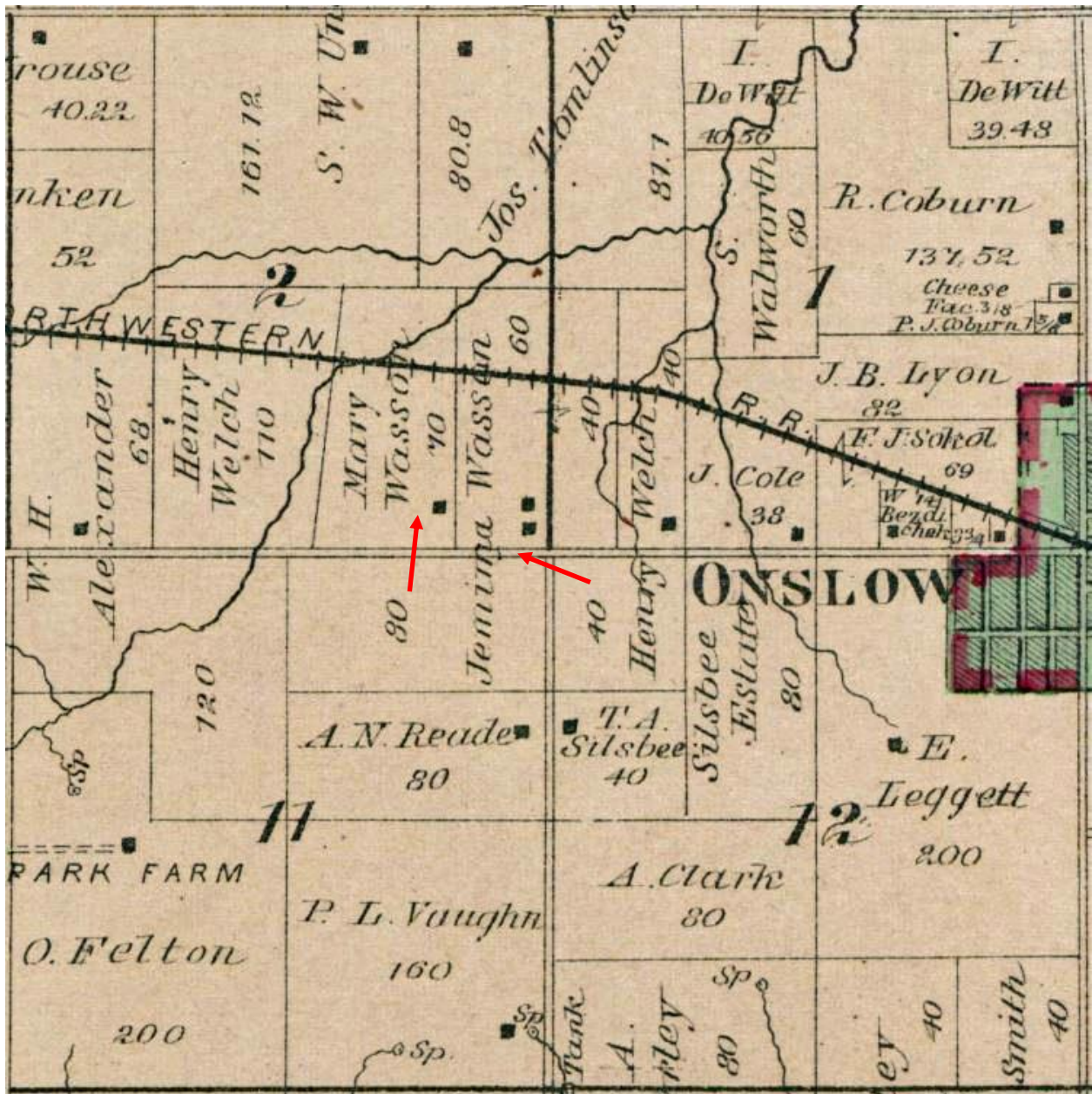
*Marker for James Wasson, Wyoming Cemetery*

James died without a will. James' father John Wasson was executor of James' estate. James' estate consisted of the farm itself, personal and household effects, farm equipment, livestock and stored hay and grain. James owed his parents a significant amount of money – John and Jemima had the biggest claims against the estate. Even after an authorized estate sale, the estate had more in debt than it could afford to pay. John petitioned the court to sell the farm.

James' widow Mary countered with a proposal to sell only enough of the farm to raise the money needed to pay off the debts. The court ordered that sale. The farm was appraised, and on February 19, 1886, the section 11 portion of the James Wasson Farm was sold to his brother-in-law David Sim for \$1700. A 30-acre portion of the James Wasson Farm in section 2 was sold to the farm next door to the west, owned by Henry Welch in 1893.

Later in 1886, David Sim sold the NW ¼ of the NE ¼ of section 11 to John Wasson for \$1.

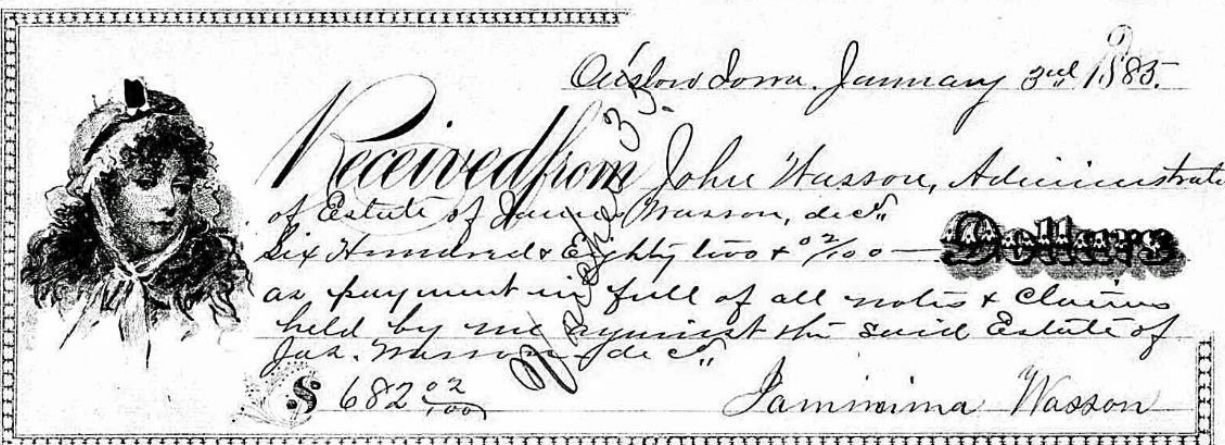
These sales resulted in the boundaries of the farms now owned by Jemima Wasson and Mary Wasson shown in the 1893 plat map, and gave the estate the money needed to pay off its debts.




This 1893 plat map shows the Madison Township farms of Jemima Wasson and Mary Wasson with their updated boundaries.

Voucher #1.  
(\$1675<sup>60</sup>)  
Ocslowd Lonna April 1886.  
Recd. Payment in full of my claim  
filed and proved up against the Estate  
of James Wasson deceased,  
John Wasson

John Wasson acknowledges that he received payment in full for his claim against his son James' estate.



Ocslowd Lonna January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1888.  
Received from John Wasson, Administrator  
of Estate of James Wasson, dec'd  
Six thousand & eighty two & <sup>02</sup>/<sub>100</sub> — **Dollars**  
as payment in full of all notes & claims  
held by me against the said Estate of  
Jas. Wasson dec'd  
\$ 682 <sup>02</sup>/<sub>100</sub>  
Jemima Wasson



Jemima Wasson acknowledges that she received payment in full for her claim against her son James' estate.

In his final months, James and Mary had purchased a number of items on credit at local stores, who then made small claims against James' estate. Items included soda, chewing tobacco, tea, lamp wicks, soap, gingham cloth, a scarf, shoes, syrup, raisins, cotton balls, ribbon, baking powder, lemon extract, starch, vinegar, varnish, ten rolls of wallpaper, toys, a toothbrush, a book, and window shades. There wasn't anything unusual about any of it, but it provides a glimpse into everyday life for James and his family in 1884.

In September 1884, Mary moved off the farm and started renting it out. She initially took some rooms over the millinery store in Onslow. In December 1885, she started renting the Lewis house in town on the north side of the railroad. When the farm debt matter was resolved in February 1886, she bought the Shaddock place on Summit Street, where she lived for the next several years. She added a porch to the house in 1894 and had a new barn built on the farm in 1895.



*During these years, Mary visited her sister Jesse, pictured, several times. Jesse lived with James and Mary at the time of the 1880 U.S. Census.*

Later that decade, Mary met Joseph Newton Johnston, a farmer in Griswold, Cass County, Iowa, and they made plans to marry and move to his Cass County farm. Mary sold her farm to W.F. Overly, and he took possession on March 15, 1898. Earlier that week, the Thomas Lightfoot household hosted a going-away event for Mary. Ella Wasson hosted a similar event for her cousin, James and Mary's daughter Minnie.

Mary Scoville Wasson and Joseph Johnston were married at the home of Thomas Lightfoot on March 16, 1898. That evening they boarded a train for Griswold and left Jones County.

Mary was widowed a second time in the early 1900s. Mary was living with her daughter Minnie in Greenville, Illinois when she died December 18, 1939. Mary was buried in Greenville's Montrose Cemetery.

**Minnie Belle Wasson (James and Mary Wasson's daughter)**

Minnie Belle Wasson married George Edwin Walker, a carpenter, in Griswold on May 28, 1902. They had three daughters, Marion Berenice, Mildred and Georgia Helen. Only Marion married. She provided Minnie with a grandchild, Mary Hadsell Myser.



*Mary Scoville Wasson and daughter Minnie (left); Minnie Belle Wasson (right)*

**Mary "Mattie" Jeunelle Wasson (James and Mary Wasson's daughter)**

Mary "Mattie" Jeunelle Wasson died December 16, 1886, at the age of 2. She was presumably buried in Wyoming Cemetery, Wyoming, Iowa, likely near her father, as her mother owned that plot, but she is not listed in the Wyoming Cemetery records, and James' family marker was not updated with her information.

Prepared by Mark David Wasson  
Last updated October 31, 2021