



Jeannette M. Wasson (1847-1914)

Jeannette Wasson was the fourth of eight children born to John and Jemima Wasson.

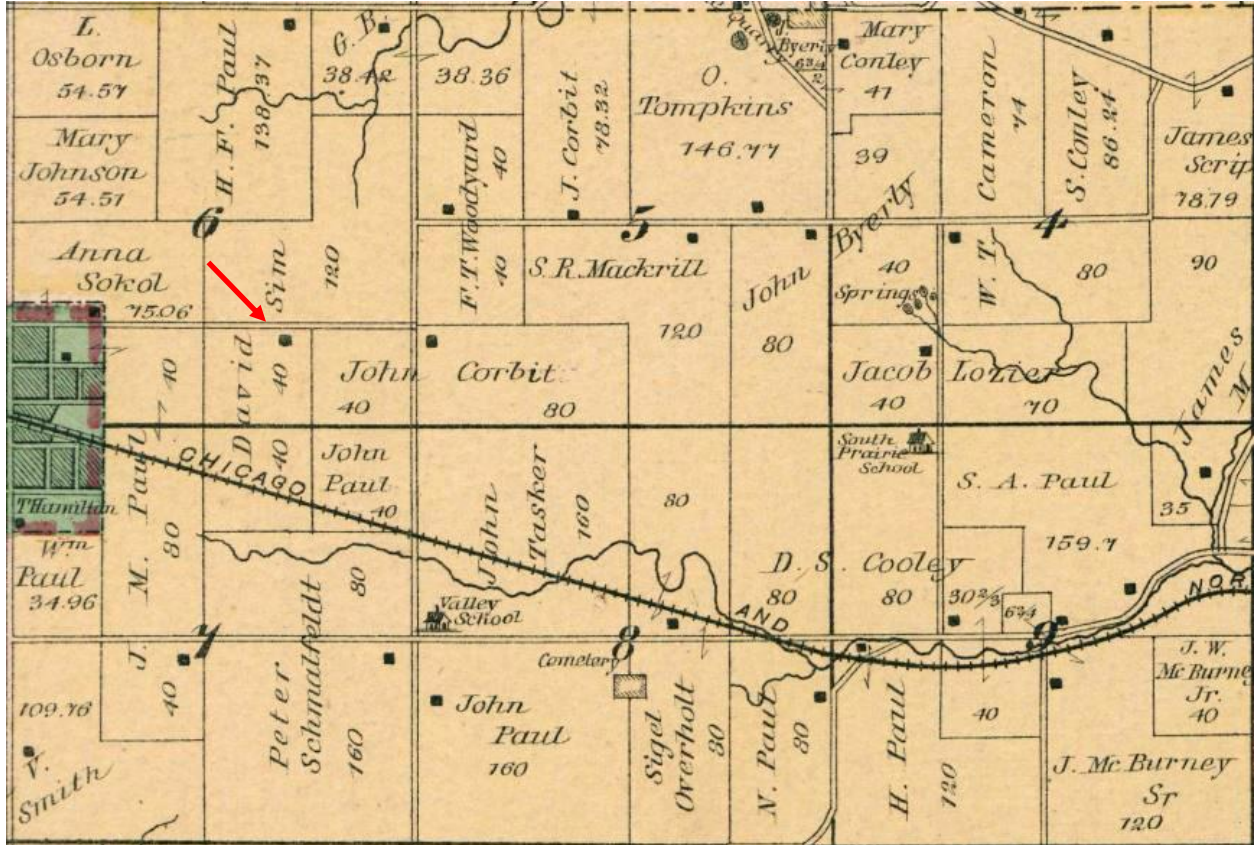
John and Jemima Wasson's daughter Jeannette was born on March 3, 1847 in Amboy, Oswego County, New York. She moved to Jackson County, Iowa with her family in 1854, and then to Jones County, Iowa by 1860.

Like the rest of her family, Jeannette attended the Scotch Grove Presbyterian Church when the family moved to the area in 1854. She united with the Onslow Presbyterian Church after it opened in the 1870s.



Jeannette Wasson Sim (left) and David Sim (right)

Jeannette married local farmer David Sim on December 20, 1871 at her parents' home. David Sim arrived in Iowa with his parents John and Rachel Sim and brother James from Pennsylvania in 1853, part of a wave of settlers from western Pennsylvania that arrived in Jones County at that time. John and Rachel established a farm east of present-day Onslow. After they married, David and Jeannette lived on his parents' farm. He eventually bought some land adjacent to his parents' farm, and later took over the family farm operation. David bought out his father in 1886, and John moved into Onslow at that time.



This 1893 plat map shows the full extent of David Sim's farm, which included 200 acres in sections 6 and 7 of Wyoming Township.

- For more about their farm, see [The Sim-Wasson Farm, Wyoming Township, Jones County, Iowa.](#)



First established in 1853 by John Sim, the Sim-Wasson Farm was later owned by his son David, David's wife Jeannette, and then Jeannette's nephew Duncan Wasson.



The part of the Sim-Wasson Farm that lies north across the road (Highway E29)



The sons of Jeannette's nephew Duncan, Boyd shoveling snow and Douglas sitting in the wagon, are seen in front of the farmhouse on the Sim-Wasson Farm that likely dates back to when David and Jeannette Sim lived on the farm. This farmhouse was replaced in 1946.

Jeannette and David had five children, including the following:

- Jemima Rachel Sim, born December 8, 1872, in Wyoming Township, Jones County, Iowa
- John A. Sim, born April 25, 1875, in Wyoming Township, Jones County, Iowa
- Stillborn Son Sim, delivered October 5, 1876, in Wyoming Township, Jones County, Iowa
- Stillborn Daughter Sim, delivered January 19, 1878, in Wyoming Township, Jones County, Iowa
- Stanley D. Sim, born January 30, 1879, in Wyoming Township, Jones County, Iowa

Two of their children were stillborn, and the other three died in infancy, none surviving to their first birthday.

Jeannette and David became quite active in the Onslow Presbyterian Church. Jeannette taught the Sunday School primary class there for more than forty years. David was elected to the position of church elder in March 1877 for a three-year term. He was repeatedly reelected to that position, and held it for more than 25 years until his death. He was also involved in Sunday School for 20 of those years.



Jeannette and David Sim, about 1878

In 1888, his father John changed his will, leaving only \$25 to David, and the bulk of his estate of about \$4500 – assuming David had no children – to his brother’s four children back in Scotland. After his father died in 1890 David contested the will, challenging his father’s competence.

John’s will claimed that he had given David a good price on the farm when he sold it to him in 1886, and John had also given David all the personal property on the farm. Testimony at the trial also indicated that John felt he had been treated quite badly by his daughter-in-law Jeannette to such an extent as to induce him to sell the farm and leave. This was the motivation behind John’s revision of his will, and seems quite at odds with the image painted in Jeannette’s obituary after she died.

David lost the case. He appealed to the Iowa Supreme Court, which determined a new trial was necessary. David Sim and his Scotland cousins then reached a settlement.

In 1899, the old public school property on the west side of Onslow was sold to David and Jeannette Sim, and they built a new residence on it. (One source about that property suggests that David Sim owned the property when the school was first built in the 1870s, but I think that was simply an awkward wording in that source.) The Sims moved into their new Onslow town home in December of that year, and Harbison Orr began renting the Sim Farm. Orr would later marry Jeannette's niece Jessie Wasson McBride in 1919.



The Sim house in town in the early 1900s, with Jeannette's nephew Duncan Wasson and his friend Will Dennison parked out front.



Old Onslow Public School. The Sims later used part of the building as a barn when they built their Onslow town house on the property in 1899.

- For more about their retirement residence, see [The Sim Town House and Properties, Onslow, Iowa.](#)

David died in 1902. His funeral was held at the Onslow Presbyterian church, and he was buried in Wyoming Cemetery, Wyoming, Iowa.

DEATH OF MR. DAVID SIM.

An Honorable and Esteemed Citizen Goes to His Reward.

Our estimate of the value of a man can well be measured by the sense of loss experienced when we fully realize that the mortal body now rests in the silent tomb. When the sleep of eternal rest begins, then our mortal natures awaken to a keen appreciation of the pleasures and happiness that were ours to enjoy in the life of him who has been called to glory. It has been said of one man, that when the spirit took his flight from the body and departed to the judgment throne, all the Angels of Heaven rejoiced for they knew that this soul would find an abundant entrance and a glad welcome with the Heavenly King.

These are the thoughts that are suggested as we contemplate the character of Mr. David Sim, who died in his home at Onslow, Thursday, March 13th, 1902, at the age of 53 years, 3 months and 28 days. His illness was of practically short duration. About February 24th he was taken with an attack of quinsy, and this was followed about a week later with stomach trouble, and as a result of these complications life was overcome and Mr. Sim was no more. The community could scarcely realize the solemn truth, nor can we yet fully comprehend what it all means. While Mr. Sim had not a rugged constitution, yet few and perhaps none realized how serious his condition was. Many knew he was sick and thought as a matter of course he would be out again in a short time, as usual when he had a sick spell; but how great the shock, how heavy the blow when the announcement came of his death! Mr. Sim has been a continuous resident of this immediate vicinity for forty-nine years—nearly half of a century. He was born at Pittsburgh, Pa., Oct. 15th, 1848. In 1853 he came west with his parents who settled on what we know now as the Sim homestead, three-fourths of a mile east of town. Here he lived until two years ago, when, after building a beautiful home in the village, he moved to town to enjoy the comforts of a retired life. On Dec. 20th, 1871, he married Jeannette Wasson. Three children were born to them, all of whom died in infancy, the eldest living only ten months.

In June, 1873, Mr. Sim united with

the Presbyterian church on profession of faith. This was two years after the church was organized. In March, 1877, he was elected and ordained a ruling elder in this church, and every three years thereafter he was re-elected to the same office. He therefore served in this capacity continuously for 25 years. What a glorious record of service for christianity and the God he loved! For over 20 years he has taken an active part in the Sunday school work, and no man was better liked than he in whatsoever capacity he served. Many of the young men who received instruction from him as a teacher of divine truth, have risen to honorable positions in life, and now with tears of thankfulness can rejoice at the good he has done.

Mr. Sim's character and life work will bear a rigid analysis. None knew him without being better for having known him. His honor and integrity were unquestioned. All his dealings with his fellow men were above reproach. His life stood for something ideal. His life strengthened the cause of the true, the beautiful and the good, whether in his church work, in school work, in his daily labors, or in political affairs, his efforts reflected his conscientiousness. As a neighbor he could not be equaled. As a friend he was true. He seemed to be in constant touch with all that was for the best. To those who knew him, these words are entirely unnecessary and wholly inadequate; and yet history is only useful as a record to strengthen traditions, and refresh memory. Mr. Sim will not soon be forgotten. There are few who possess all the elements for good that he daily exercised. No one is like him; no one can take his place. He was without demonstration and his good deeds were unaffected. It can scarcely seem possible that any could miss him more than the writer, and yet testimony is weak now to express appreciation. It is perhaps sufficient to realize that his kindness of heart, his charity for all, his malice toward none and his firmness in the right, were keenly appreciated while he was yet among us, and that Mr. Sim himself had the satisfaction of seeing some of the fruits of the good seed he had sown. There is too much for the writer's pen to express. The bleeding heart must find expression in solitude through watery eyes. Mr. Sim's life was fragrant; his memory is sweet; his reward is realized. Even the children loved him and cannot conceal their grief at their loss.

Mr. Sim leaves as his sole survivor

Mr. Sim leaves as his sole survivor his faithful wife, his constant companion and attendant for over 30 years. It is not for words to express what Mr. Sim was to her. He was her all in all; her hope and joy of life. Death has entered and life is no longer real. Sympathy finds abundant expression in all hearts, and Mrs. Sim can rest assured that her sorrow is not borne alone.

The funeral services were held at the Presbyterian church Sunday morning and were conducted by the pastor, Rev. J. R. McQuown. The severe inclemency of the weather prevented many from attending. The floral tribute was beautiful. The pew which Mr. Sim occupied for so many years was draped in mourning and left vacant. A life-size portrait hung on the wall above the seat, and this scene was very touching indeed. The burial took place in Wyoming cemetery by the side of the children who had preceded their father to the heavenly land. All that remained of the mortal body of Mr. Sim has been laid to rest; but the good he has done will live after him.

R. M. CORBIT.

David Sim's obituary, Anamosa Eureka, March 20, 1902



Marker for David Sim, Wyoming Cemetery

David had a will in which he named his wife the executrix, and in which he left her all of his property. It was a bit surprising to read because the real estate included only part of the Sim-Wasson Farm and a wood lot. David was rather sickly, so much of the farm and all of their town properties were apparently already in Jeannette's name when David died.

Harbison Orr rented the farm until 1906. After the John Wasson Farm west of Onslow was sold, Joe Wasson moved onto his sister's farm with his second wife Lydia and his son Duncan, renting it from Jeannette. Orr bought the adjacent John Walston farm.

By 1910 Jeannette had given or sold her farm to her nephew Duncan – a 1910 plat map shows Duncan Wasson as the owner of the farm. Although this was now often referred to as the Duncan Wasson Farm in local papers, it was also referred to as the David Sim Farm as late as 1919. For the most part, Duncan rented out the farm first to his father and later to others until March 1922 when he moved onto the farm with his wife Esther, whom he married the previous October. Duncan and Esther raised their children there.



Jeannette Sim

Jeannette died April 23, 1914 of congestion of the bowels. Jeannette was buried in Wyoming Cemetery.

Death of Mrs. Jeannette Sim at Onslow.

Mrs. Jeannette Sim died at her home in Onslow, Friday afternoon, April 24, 1914, of congestion of the bowels after an illness of about a week's duration. She had been falling in strength for some time, but she was not obliged to give up her work until about a week before her decease. She had been a hard working woman all her life, and no doubt often worked beyond her strength. Relatives and neighbors did all that was possible to be done for her, and even the skill of her physician and a trained nurse were unavailing in warding off the inevitable.

Jeannette Wasson Sim was born at Oswego, New York, March 3, 1847. In 1853, she came to Iowa with her parents, John and Jennima Russell Wasson, locating in Madison township, Jones county. Since 1853 she has been a resident of the vicinity of Onslow continuously. On December 20, 1871, she was married to David Sim. To this union five children were born, all dying in infancy. The one living the longest, died at the age of ten months. She mourned for all of her little ones. On March 13, 1902, she was called upon to mourn the death of her husband. Since that time she has practically lived alone in her comfortable home in Onslow.

Mrs. Sim is survived by two brothers, namely William Wasson of Denver, Colorado, and Joseph Wasson of Onslow, Iowa, and one sister, Mrs. Mary Gridley of Wyoming, Iowa, besides several nephews and nieces and a host of friends.

Early in life Mrs. Sim confessed the Christian life as her standard, and for many years she has been a faithful member of the Onslow Presbyterian church, the same church in which her deceased husband had been an elder for more than a quarter of a century. During all of this time she would be found faithfully in her place Sabbath morning, unless unavoidably detained. It was appropriate that the pew in the church which she had occupied for so many years should be vacant and draped in mourning on the occasion of her funeral. For at least forty years she had been the teacher of the primary class in the Presbyterian Sunday school. Sunday after Sunday, month after month, year after year, beginning as a young lady, and ending when death called, she had assembled her little flock on the same platform and taught them the love of Jesus. She took a personal interest in each child, and greeted each child and loved each cherub as they came into and went out from her class with all the tenderness and affection of a mother's love. Not only on Sunday when in the class did she demonstrate her affection, but on any day and at any time when the opportunity offered, each child was sure of a tender caress and a mother-like blessing. Many a man and woman now past middle life, many a young man and maiden, many a boy and girl can today look back upon the time when as a little child they were taught the story of Christ's life and death from her lips. The hearts of many today bleed in anguish for all feel the loss of a friend. She will live in memory as one whose life was as pure and fragrant of good as the sweetest flower that blows.

The life of the deceased was one of

that above.

The life of the deceased was one of service. Whether in the home or elsewhere, she was never idle. She was always ready with a kindness, and always doing her part with her hands and her heart for the uplift of humanity. Many a child will long remember her famed ginger cookies, and with all, her generous and unselfish hospitality was a household word. Of her no child or adult could ever say "I was an hungered and ye fed me not." Though bent in form, and somewhat crippled with work and bodily ailments, her smile of welcome and her hearty greeting, her proverbial kindness of heart without ostentation, her generous hospitality to all without affectation—these characteristics will linger long in memory. She can only be remembered as a motherly Christian soul whose life has been a benediction to those around her. The angels will know her and welcome her for she had partaken of their nature, and at the feet of her Master in heaven she will receive the rich reward of a life eternal.

The funeral service was held Sunday morning, April 27, at the Onslow Presbyterian church, the pastor, Rev. E. W. Bonbow having charge of the service. The attendance was large. Friends from Cedar Rapids, Maquoketa, Wyoming and Anamosa were present testifying of their respect for the memory of the life of the deceased. Mrs. Bernice Hanson sang "One Sweetly Solemn Thought" very beautifully. The pall bearers were mostly her old neighbors, namely, W. C. Paul, S. G. Hutton, R. H. Steeper, M. M. Franke, W. M. Dennison and R. M. Corbit. After the service the body was taken to the Wyoming cemetery for burial. Mrs. Mary Cathline Chaswell sang "The Linn of the Elysian" at the burial ceremony with tender effect. The body of the deceased was laid to rest beside the remains of her deceased husband.

The relatives at the funeral were: Joseph Wasson and son, Duncan of Onslow; Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Gridley, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Wherry and son, Sim and Charles, and Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Krouse and son Earl, all of Wyoming.

R. M. C.

Jeannette Sim's obituary, Anamosa Eureka, May 7, 1914



Markers for Jeannette Wasson Sim, Wyoming Cemetery

In 1912, Jeannette sold most of her property in town to Joe and Duncan Wasson. A week before she died, Jeannette transferred ownership of her Onslow house and property to Duncan.

Jeannette died without a will. Her nephew Will Krouse successfully petitioned the court to appoint Clifford Paul as executor of her estate, listing her brothers Joe and Will Wasson, her sister Mary Gridley, and the three surviving children of her late sister Jane Krouse, who died in 1903, as Jeannette's survivors. Krouse's petition did not mention any of the surviving children of Jeannette's late brothers John and James, whose widows had moved away with their children several years earlier. The estate was estimated to be worth about \$2000.

As part of the process of settling her estate, Clifford Paul called for Duncan to appear before the court. Although details were not provided in the news coverage, I suspect it had to do with the circumstances surrounding her giving Duncan her house and remaining town properties shortly before she died.

In any event, by the time Jeannette died, Duncan owned the 200-acre farm east of Onslow as well as the Onslow house and several town properties that had once belonged to the Sims. In February 1918, Duncan sold the town house and other town properties to his father Joe for \$4000. The sale included lots 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 on Block 10 and lots 1, 2, 3, 16, 17, 18, 19 on Block 11.

Research Notes

Jeannette and her nephew Duncan appeared to have had a close relationship. Duncan ended up with her farm and her house in town, and news coverage suggested that she was generous with him at his birthdays.

Jeannette did not have any children who lived for more than a year, and when her husband died in 1902, she was alone. Her brother Joe's wife Carrie separated from him in 1898 and moved to Stanwood, Iowa. They divorced the following year. Joe and Carrie's daughters moved to Stanwood with their mother, while then-13-year-old Duncan stayed with his father. As Joe and Jeannette were close, perhaps this gave Jeannette some "mothering" opportunities with Duncan.

Duncan was also reaching the age where he could help her out with traditional "men's work" chores. Jeannette had two nephews still in the area, the Krouse brothers, but they were older, a bit further away, and had families of their own to take care of, whereas Duncan did not have his own family until after Jeannette died.

This is speculation, of course, but it may explain why Duncan got so much from his aunt when she had a number of other nieces and nephews.

Jemima Rachel Sim (David and Jeannette Sim's daughter)

Daughter Jemima Rachel died in infancy on March 16, 1873. She was buried in Wyoming Cemetery.



Marker for Jemima Sim, Wyoming Cemetery

John A. Sim (David and Jeannette Sim's son)

Son John A. died in infancy on September 15, 1875. He was buried in Wyoming Cemetery.



Marker for John Sim, Wyoming Cemetery

Stillborn Son Sim (David and Jeannette Sim's son)

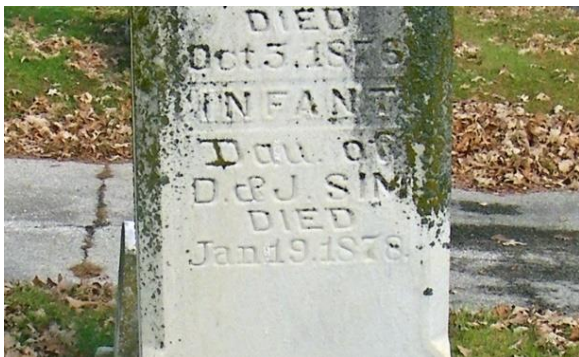
A son was stillborn on October 5, 1876. The child was buried in Wyoming Cemetery.



Marker for Stillborn Son Sim, Wyoming Cemetery

Stillborn Daughter Sim (David and Jeannette Sim's daughter)

A daughter was stillborn on January 19, 1878. The child was buried in Wyoming Cemetery.



Marker for Stillborn Daughter Sim, Wyoming Cemetery

Stanley D. Sim (David and Jeannette Sim's son)

Son Stanley D. Sim died in infancy on November 18, 1879. He was buried in Wyoming Cemetery.



Stanley Sim



Marker for Stanley Sim, Wyoming Cemetery



The David and Jeannette Sim family plot, Wyoming Cemetery

Prepared by Mark David Wasson
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