

The Smith Family of Section 3, Randolph Twp.

(extracted from W. H. Beers, *History of Montgomery County, Ohio*, 1882, tax records, atlases and maps of Randolph Township)

Section 3 is the most northeastern section in Randolph Township. Its eastern boundary is the Stillwater River and it is bisected by the Dayton-Covington Pike (State Route 48). Because of its proximity to the river, it was one of the first sections populated by the early settlers. Those owning land in this section in 1802 were David Mast, Daniel Hoover and David Hoover. By 1826 David Sheets owned the David Hoover farm. This article will discuss the relationships between the Sheets and Smith families, all of whom operated mills in Section 3 along a mill race that had been developed along the Stillwater River.

Thomas J. Smith (born August 16, 1815) of Lexington, Rockbridge Co., Virginia, lost his father at a very young age. He apprenticed himself to a harness and saddle maker for five years and then, in 1838, left Virginia with his widowed mother and sister to come to Montgomery Co., Ohio. He began manufacturing harnesses and keeping a hotel. On July 1, 1841, he married Nancy E. Sheets (born July 1, 1823 in Montgomery Co., OH), daughter of rifle maker Martin Sheets of Union, and had a son, Emor E. (born May 11, 1842) and a daughter Lora A. (born August 9, 1850), now Mrs. Guye.

Thomas Smith tired of harness making and embarked in the distilling business to make a living for his young family. The Smith distillery is shown on the mill race along the Stillwater River in Section 3 in the 1851 Atlas of Montgomery County, just south of Martin Sheets rifle boring mill. Smith went back to farming when the price of wines declined. By 1869 his son, E. E. Smith, is shown as the owner of 82.25 acres of land in Section 3. The elder Smith died in 1879. In 1882, Beers reports that widow Smith was living in the house Thomas had built on the northeast corner of Main Street (Dayton-Covington Pike) and First Street in Union. (Early plat maps of Union do not show a First Street). The 1869 map of Union does show a Mrs. Smith living on the southwest corner of Main and Martindale Road (which was called Cross Street on all the early maps).

Young Emor Smith was put in charge of his father's distillery at the age of 15 years. Even with only a common education, he showed remarkable skills as a businessman and got the distillery back on sound financial basis. In 1862 it is reported (in Beer's history book) that he made \$22,000 in 7-months' time, paid \$10,000 in taxes, donated \$800 to the war effort and bought his way out of military service by hiring a substitute to take his place. We are not sure when the distillery and other mills ceased operations.

Emor married Amanda Smith (born December 21, 1839 in Montgomery Co., OH), daughter of Samuel Smith, on May 12, 1864. Their only child was a daughter named Wealthy (born February 11, 1868 - died November 11, 1870). After the death of their daughter, they adopted another girl, Minnie M. Schanck (born March 5, 1868) who was still residing in the Smith household in 1882.

Emor was active in community affairs. He was one of seven men who proposed the Toledo, Delphos & Burlington Railroad (later became the C. H. & D.). In 1882 he was serving as Township Clerk and representing the county at the congressional convention.