

A Profile of James A. Smith:

James was believed to have been born 01 Oct 1829 on Amherst Island. According to the 1891 Midland census, his father was born in the USA and his mother in Upper Canada. They were Presbyterian.

We have only speculation as to the identity of James A.'s father. In the 1861 Colborne census, there is a Jacob Smith, wife Elizabeth and daughter Margaret Smith. Jacob is listed as a grocer/baker, born in the USA, his wife born in Upper Canada. Their ages put them within the right time frame. Jacob died in Jan 1871 in Brighton at the age of 74.

The 1851 Haldimand Twp. census lists a James Smith, labourer, age 21. This could very well be James A., as the age is correct.

James married Sarah Ann Redfearn c1854-1856, possibly in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, as Sarah resided in Lakeport (near Colborne, Ontario). The minister may have been Rev. Miller, who later drowned in Lakeport Harbour. Their first child was Franklin James Smith (b 28 Feb 1857:Lakeport).

1857 Directory of the Province of Ontario: James A. Smith is a fisherman living in Colborne Harbour.

1861 Haldimand Twp. census: James, a fisherman, is listed with his wife Sarah and two children - Franklin, aged 4, and Charles Edwin, aged 2.

History of Brighton by Wilmot M. Tobey (Chap. XXII, p. 396): James A. Smith is listed as one of seven merchants in Brighton. From the same book (p. 401): "In 1865, J.C. Sanford, James Taylor and James A. Smith were wood and coal dealers."

Birth Records of Northumberland County (1869- 1879): Martha Jane Smith born 18 May 1872 to James Antona Smith and Sarah Anne Redfearn. (James always wrote his name as "James A. Smith".)

1871 Brighton census: James A.'s occupation is shown as a shipwright.

c1873-1874, James A. opened a fish market called 'J.A. Smith Fresh and Salted Fish Market' in Port Hope. From The Guide (13 Jun 1874):

Mr Smith was heard. He had rented a shop in town for the purpose of selling fish, but had since been informed that he could not sell anywhere but on the market. Fish would not keep in the open air, and he wished to request of the Council liberty to proceed with his business in the shop. It would be a permanent one, where people could procure fresh fish at any season of the year. Mr Smith was granted permission to sell fish for the present, Coun. Chisholm undertaking to prepare a By-law to cover that ground.

Advertisements ran in the local paper from Jun 1874-cMay 1876.

James A.'s business was one of several destroyed in the Feb 1878 Ganaraska River flood (loss

placed at \$3,000), but after a couple of months he reopened his business as 'Smith's Fruit House and Oyster Lunches' on the same street. From The Guide (19 Dec 1878):

STILL ALIVE -- Smith's Fish, Oyster & Fruit House -- Is again opened in the store lately occupied by J.C. McNaughton as an Auction Room, where can be found as usual a good supply of FRESH FISH, OYSTERS, & all kinds of FRUIT. In addition, he has opened a FIRST CLASS LUNCH ROOM, where a good meal can be had at all hours, at your own prices. Please call & see for yourselves. S. Smith -- J. A. Smith, Agent.

There is a date in the left hand bottom corner that says, Port Hope, March 25, 1878, but it is uncertain as when he actually reopened.

It is believed that James A. and his family lived in the back of the store. He must have sold the business c1881-1882, as he shows up living in Midland, Ontario c1883.

James died 21 Apr 1904 in Midland, Ontario.

Contributed by Gord Dandy of Welland, Ontario 28 Jan 2007

