

LORENZO ALBERT SIMMONS BIOGRAPHY

FROM "MOSES SIMMONS AND HIS DESCENDANTS" by L. A. SIMMONS

LORENZO ALBERT SIMMONS (8) Henry 7, Lorenzo 6, John 5, Job 4, Job 3, Moses 2, Moses 1. b. in Story County, Iowa, May 22, 1857; d-----; m. in Smith County, Kansas, Jan. 30, 1879, to Margaret Ann Porter, dau. of Arthur B. and Margaret (Hill) Porter, who was born in Washington County, Ohio, May 8, 1860; d-----.

Children

Henry Arthur Simmons, b. April 13, 1880.

Maude Annis Simmons, b. April 5, 1882.

Nellie Agnes Simmons, b. May 10, 1884.

Guy Amos Simmons, b. Aug. 21, 1886.

Claude Alfred Simmons, b. Dec. 22, 1888.

Lloyd Albert Simmons, b. Aug. 30, 1891.

Leola Ariel Simmons, b. May 4, 1894.

Mabel Amanda Simmons, b. May 11, 1901.

Rolland Allen Simmons, b. Sept. 20, 1903.

The following is the autobiography of Lorenzo Albert Simmons:

I came to Nebraska with my parents in September 1862, when I was five years old. The first few weeks the family lived a short distance west of Nebraska City on the old Pikes Peak Trail, and it was while we were living here that the "steam wagon," as it was called, was started out of the City to be utilized as motive power to pull the prairie schooners

across the plains. The steam wagon was built similar to the traction engines of later days, but it was not a success for the purpose built; as I well remember that they only succeeded in getting out of Nebraska City as far as the house where we lived. After going this short distance it was found necessary to discontinue the trip and the steam wagon was left for many years where they abandoned it. I have very good reason to remember this trial trip of the "steam wagon". They had run out of water and were coming to our place to replenish their supply. I was just going over the hill to see them as they started back, and when I saw them coming toward me I was so frightened that I ran for the house and jumped through a window, glass and all.

We moved from this place to Wilson Creek, twelve miles west of Nebraska City, and wintered there. The following spring we moved to Saltillo, Lancaster County, about fifty miles west of the city on the Overland Trail, where father had purchased 160 acres of timbered land near his homestead. At this time there were only eleven voters in that county.

We were compelled a number of times to move eastward toward the river on account of the Indian raids through the South Platte country, and it was on one of these trips that my youngest sister was born, at Wyoming, a boat landing six or seven miles north of Nebraska City, and my mother was brought back to Salt Creek, fifty miles in a lumber wagon, when the child was only four days old.

During the earlier days the only trading point was Nebraska City, fifty miles east of us. In 1867, the city of Lincoln was located, and the capitol of the new state of Nebraska was located here, and Lincoln soon became a town of importance. In 1869, the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad was built into Lincoln; and in 1870 the Midland was built from Nebraska City to Lincoln. It was on this line that I had my first

car ride, the Company giving a free excursion from Lincoln to Nebraska City. The cars used for this excursion were flat cars, with cross ties placed crossway on them for the seats; except the rear car, which was a coach occupied by the Governor and railroad officials. Several amusing incidents occurred on this novel trip, one of which happened to be a well dressed man on our car. He wore a plug hat, and as the wind was blowing quite hard, his tile blew off and happened to alight near a farmer who was working in a field close by the track. Mr. Farmer picked up the hat, put it on his head, made a bow to the train and resumed his work. On reaching the City of the Big Muddy, a free dinner was served the excursionists by the citizens, and an excursion on the River by steamboat after which the train went back to Lincoln.

In the early days of settlement in this country the educational facilities were very limited, and only two or three months of winter school were taught at some private house, and what education we received was by the closest attention to books when the opportunity presented itself. The summer months were occupied by herding cattle on the prairies until I was seventeen years old. I was then put to work on the farm. I saw a railroad train for the first time when I was eleven years of age. That was at the village of Lincoln, when the Burlington built from Plattsmouth to Lincoln.

At the age of twenty, I left home and started in life for myself. I did considerable running around, as most young men will when they start out, without strings tied to them. On the 17th day of December, 1878, I left Saltillo on horseback for Smith County, Kansas, where a certain young lady lived in whom I was interested. A Nebraska blizzard commenced, and the second day that I was on the road the snow blew about so much that you could not see a hundred feet ahead, but I pushed on and reached my destina-

tion without serious consequences. Here, on the thirteenth day of January, 1879, at the residence of Arthur B. Porter, in Smith County, Kansas, I was married to Miss Margaret Ann Porter, a great-granddaughter of Amos Porter, one of the original forty-nine settlers of the Northwest, at Marietta, Ohio, in 1788, and the daughter of Arthur B. and Margaret (Hill) Porter.

During this winter, Mr. Porter and myself went into the western part of Nebraska and took homesteads, he locating in Red Willow County, and I in Furnas County, six miles east of Beaver City. Here we moved in April, 1879, and built a sod house on our homestead. I broke acres of sod, put in a little sod corn, and at harvest time we drove in a covered wagon back to Lancaster County, where I worked in the harvest field during that season, making enough to keep us the following winter in our new home. We returned to Furnas County in September. Not a drop of rain fell in that section of the state that year, and of course nothing was raised so we were left with a very small supply of provisions to last through the winter.

On the thirteenth of April, 1880, our oldest son, Henry Arthur was born, and we remained on the homestead until June, when, as we had not yet had rain, we concluded that we had better hunt for a more favorable location; accordingly we loaded up and came back to Lancaster County. We located at Raymond, then a village only a few months old, and I started the first meat market that the village ever had. I operated this for a few months, then sold out and moved to Saltillo, where I worked for a grain and stock buyer at that place for three years.

My wife was appointed postmistress at this place and I contracted the star mail route running from Saltillo to DeWitt, Nebraska.

Our oldest daughter, Maude Annis, was born April 5, 1882, while we were living at Saltillo.

We remained at Saltillo until the autumn of 1883, when I sold out and went to the new town of Cortland. The Union Pacific Railroad had just been built from Lincoln to Beatrice and the town of Cortland was located in February, 1884, about half way between Lincoln and Beatrice, and it was expected that it would grow into quite a large town. Here I worked at contracting and building for about two years; erecting and selling a number of residences.

Late in the fall of 1885, after the Cleveland administration had been organized, I was appointed postmaster at Cortland, which position I held for four years. During this official period I was elected as delegate to the National Postmasters Convention at Chicago. I was also elected president of the Nebraska Postmasters Association during this term.

In 1887, while postmaster at Cortland, I arranged the first political debate in which William Jennings Bryan participated. This debate was on the tariff question between William Jennings Bryan and C. O. Wheedon, of Lincoln, and was held in the German Hall at Cortland. The crowd attending this debate was so large that many could not get into the building and stood at the open windows to listen to the orators.

Mr. Bryan came out of this debate with flying colors and from that time on his political fame spread to its present proportion.

I was chairman of this meeting, and claim the honor of introducing Mr. Bryan to his first audience in a political debate. In 1896, when Mr. Bryan was a candidate for president he went out of his way to make a speech at Cortland, and said there he had his start in the political life and could not pass it by in his campaign for the highest office in the gift of the people. The citizens of Cortland, regardless of political affiliation, turned out to greet him and tendered him a banquet at the Odd Fellows Opera House after the meeting. My two daughters, Annie and

Nellie, had the honor of waiting on Mr. Bryan's table.

At the close of the Cleveland administration, I resigned as postmaster and engaged in general merchandise business at Cortland. This was during the period of time in which drougths caused so great a financial depression through the West that it was felt in business of all kinds, and my business venture did not prove a success.

I then started working for the Union Pacific Railroad Company as night operator at Cortland, and was in this position for a year, when I was sent to Princeton, Nebraska, as station agent.

I held this position until Mr. Cleveland was again elected, when, at the request of the patrons of the Cortland post office, I was again appointed postmaster there. I served through this administration and in 1896, when Mr. McKinley was elected president, I again resigned.

During our residence at Cortland the following children were born: Nellie Agnes, Guy Amos, Claude Alfred, Lloyd Albert and Leola Ariel.

On July 4, 1898, I was again appointed station agent for the Union Railroad at Princeton, Nebraska, which position I held until June 15, 1900, when I was transferred to Raymond, Nebraska, in the same capacity where I stayed until September, 1915.

While living at Raymond, I owned and operated a cement block business for a few years, and later sold this business.

I purchased a small farm adjoining the village of Raymond in 1906, and erected a residence on this property. It was built of grey stone and is one of the best houses in or around Raymond.

During my residence at Cortland, Gage County, I was nominated by the Democratic Party as candidate for legislature. My ticket was defeated as it is invariably is in this County.

I was elected treasuere of the high school at Cortland, and served two years, and was a member of the village board of Trustees for three year.

After moving to Lancaster County I was nominated by the Democrats as a legislative candidate in 1908, and in this Republican stronghold where their majority is usually 2500 to 3000 I was only beaten a few hundred votes.

In 1911, while I was attending the Head Camp of the Modern Woodmen of America as delegate, at Buffalo, New York, I was placed upon my party's ticket for county sheriff and was again defeated, but only by a small majority.

After severing my services with the Union Pacific Railroad Company at Raymond, I moved my family to Lincoln in 1915.

In 1916 I was elected Sheriff of Lancaster County (the only Democrat ever to be elected Sheriff in the county.) I served as Sheriff during 1917 and 1918, during the world war and the first part of the 18th Amendment. I was credited with an excellent record, retired at the end of the term and have since resided in Lincoln.

Lincoln Daily State Journal, Jan. 31, 1904.

AN ELITE SILVER WEDDING

Saturday evening, January 30, 1904, at the Woodman hall at Raymond, Nebr., in honor of Mr. L. A. Simmons and wife. This unique affair was planned by the children, and to say it was a perfect success is putting it mildly. The hall was beautifully decorated and at 7:30 the guests began to arrive, and by 9 o'clock nearly 200 guests were present. For an hour the company engaged in social games and friendly chat. This was followed with a beautiful and appropriate musical program, interspersed with readings suited to the occasion, and a credit to all. This was

followed by a brief account of the life of Mr. and Mrs. Simmons, after which the wedding ceremony was performed by Rev. J. G. Stannard to the delight and satisfaction of all. Congratulatory expressions were extended and it is safe to say that the language could not frame more hearty expressions for the future welfare and happiness of this couple. One beautiful feature connected with the ceremony was the presence of their children, who formed a semi-circle about the happy parents. A beautiful repast, all of which was provided and prepared by the children, awaited the guests. Ninety plates were spread. The menu consisted of Oyster stew, salted wafers, celery, queen olives, sweet pickles, saratoga chips, shrimp salad, mayonnaise dressing, pressed turkey, cold Boston baked beans, fresh tea rolls, fruit jelly, whipped cream, lemon ice cream, assorted cakes, oranges, bananas, mixed nuts, coffee. As soon as the guests had taken their places at the tables, Dr. Polk acquitted himself in a very impressive and highly appropriate presentation address, representing the following silver offerings:

Six-piece tea set from their children.

A very large and beautiful coffee and water urn, a syrup pitcher and set of dessert spoons by Rev. and Mrs. J. G. Stannard, Rev. and Mrs. C. M. Cantrall, Dr. and Mrs. L. F. Polk, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Cameron, Mr. and Mrs. N. A. Mickey, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Deuser, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Van Tuyl, Mr. and Mrs. F. B. Honey, Mr. and Mrs. G. E. Weller, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Priest, Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Carver, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Billows, Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Cadwallader, Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Weller, Mr. and Mrs. J. O. Saunders, Mr. and Mrs. William La Rue, Mr. and Mrs. L. N. Wilcox, Mr. and Mrs. H. S. Weaver, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Reed, Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Larimer, Mr. and Mrs. E. N. Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Emigh, Mr. and Mrs. R. N. Overhalser, Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Hathorn, Mrs. J. L. Bartlett, Mrs. J. A. Nord.

A handsome bakedish and pickle jar by F. C. Kinyon, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Leckliter, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Hotchkiss, Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Forke, Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Lindquist, Mr. J. A. Nord, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Housel, Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Polley, Mr. David Housel, Miss Ella Hetrick.

A butter dish by Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Aden, Mr. and Mrs. L. Proctor, Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Riddell and Miss Olive Randolph.

A berry spoon by Mr. and Mrs. W. Whitaker and Mrs. J. W. Montgomery.

A beautiful fruit dish by Mr. J. F. Gross, of Wahoo, Nebraska.

An elegant tenerige urn matt by Mrs. J. S. Nesbit, of Waterloo, Nebraska.

A salad set by Miss Grace Ivey.

A berry spoon by Mr. and Mrs. Martin Nissen.

A cream ladle by Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Bonebright, Cortland, Nebr.

A set of teaspoons by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hansen.

A berry spoon by Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Grady.

A set of teaspoons by Mrs. Ann Bracken, of Lincoln, Nebr.

A berry spoon by Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Hansen.

A butter knife and sugar shell by Misses Rosette and Susie Simmons, of Saltillo, Nebraska.

Forty-two years ago, Mr. Simmons moved with his parents to Lancaster County, where he has since resided, except as noted below. They first located at Saltillo, living in a log house. At this time there were but eleven families in the county. Mr. Simmons worked on the farm until seventeen years of age, when he began work for the B. & M. Railroad company and continued in their employ until his twenty-second year, when he was united in marriage to Miss Maggie Porter, the great granddaughter of Amos Porter, the last survivor of the original forty-eight settlers at Marietta, Ohio, in 1788, which marked the opening of the new great west. This mar-

riage was consumated in Smith County, Kansas. They celebrated the first two years of their married life on a homestead near Beaver City, Nebr., living in a sod house erected by their own skilled labor. After two years they returned to Saltillo, remaining one year, then moved to Cortland, Nebr., where he was appointed postmaster, which position he held for eight years, when he entered the employ of the U. P. Railroad company, the last four years being located at this place. His many friends express the high esteem in which he and his family are held.

Several out of town guests were present.

The Lincoln Daily Star, Jan. 31, 1929.

GOLDEN WEDDING OF MR. AND MRS. SIMMONS

Two hundred guests attended the receptions given this afternoon from 3 to 5 o'clock and this evening from 7 to 9 o'clock at the home of Mr. and Mrs. L. A. Simmons, 139 North Twelfth street, in observance of their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Many of the guests are from out of town. Those in the receiving line this afternoon besides Mr. and Mrs. Simmons were Mrs. J. A. Murphy and Mrs. H. P. Pierce, daughters living in Long Beach, Cal.; a son, H. A. Simmons and Mrs. Simmons from Chicago, and C. A. Simmons, another son from Chicago; L. A. Simmons, Jr., and wife of Omaha; Mrs. E. G. Carver, a daughter living in Lincoln; Rolland A. Simmons of Lincoln and Guy A. Simmons, another son from Denver. Three granddaughters, Kathryn Carver, Margaret Simmons and Marian Morris assisted in serving. Mrs. Rolland Simmons was in charge of the guest book. Refreshments were served at the reception and the color motif carried out the golden anniversary idea. Baskets in blue and gold straw flowers and golden tapers decorated the tables while large blue and gold baskets filled with masses of yellow chrysanthemums were used thruout the living room.

The same group will assist at the reception this evening.

Rev. J. G. Standard of University Place who attended their silver wedding anniversary was honored guest at the reception.

At 12 o'clock dinner was given in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Simmons today at their home by their children. Covers were placed for twenty-four guests. The table was lovely with blue holders fitted with golden tapers and a blue basket filled with golden blossoms for the centerpiece.

Mrs. Murphy arrived from Long Beach Saturday and Mrs. Pierce arrived last Thursday. Mr. and Mrs. H. A. Simmons arrived from Chicago on Tuesday and C. A. Simmons of Chicago arrived in Lincoln today. Mr. and Mrs. Simmons, Jr., of Omaha arrived in Lincoln Tuesday and the son from Denver is expected today.

Mr. Simmons came to Lincoln in 1862 from Ames, Iowa, and his wife came to Lincoln in 1876 from Marietta, O. She was Maggie A. Porter before her marriage.

Moses Simmons and His Descendants from (Ship Fortune) 1621 to 1930. 300 pp 56 illustrations. By Lorenzo Albert Simmons, Lincoln, Nebr. 1930.

L. A.

Mr. ~~XXXXXX~~ Simmons is one of the earliest pioneers in Nebraska, coming with his parents in ~~1848~~¹⁸⁶² and settling with them on a homestead about six miles south~~west~~ of Lincoln. Here he grew to manhood, married and still resides. His memories of pioneer life make him one of the best living historical authorities.

Within the last two months he has accurately located the Old Steam Wagon Road, with its early ranches, across Otoe and Lancaster counties and across the Blue River into Seward county. Mr. Simmons was elected as a democrat sheriff of this strongly republican county in 1916 serving two years.

This study of the Simmons family in America was begun ^{twenty}~~ten~~ years ago and has been pursued as a labor of love at intervals until its completion. Eleven generations are catalogued with many personal biographies and pictures. The list of families intermarried makes a valuable cross reference for other families. Students of family history will find this volume of great value.

A.E.S.

(L. A. SIMMONS died February 15 1937)

For correction
Please return
As Requested Thank you
L.A.S.

THE LAST INDIAN RAID IN LANCASTER COUNTY.

By L.A. Simmons, (One who was there) 1862 - 1936

The last Indian raid into Lancaster County, ("Scare") as it was called by the Pioneers, occurred on August 24th. 1864.

In the morning of this date the Government Scouts rode through the settlement warning every one to congregate at the ranch station at Saltillo for defence against the Indians, that there was two thousand of them crossing the Blue River at Camden, twenty miles west. In a few hours every one in the settlement, with what they could put in their wagons with their families, gathered at Saltillo ranch and were assigned the east side of salt creek on the north side of the freight road.

The scouts had held all freight wagons that had been camped there and stopped all west going freight trains, and by four P.M. about two hundred of them had arrived, they were given the south side of the freight road on the east side of the creek.

About four o'clock in the evening a train of two thousand Mormons arrived on their way to Salt Lake, they were placed on the west side of the creek, and south side of the freight road.

About the same hour a company of regulars and a company of light Artillery came in from Nebraska City, on their way to Fort Laramie, they were placed on the west side of the creek, and north side of the road. Their artillery was staked about the present site of the Church in Jamaica.

There was great excitement in camp during the evening, some wanting to move the families eastward toward the Missouri river at once, but the Government Scouts advised against dividing forces until further investigating the situation.

The next morning the Scouts reported that the Indians had not come any closer than Cheese creek ranch, located on cheese creek (now called Haines branch) about two miles south of the present town of Denton. The supposition being that the Indians had learned the strength of the defenders, and had turned back.

After consultation with the Scouts, it was deemed advisable to move the families eastward for a short time until things quieted down to some extent. This was done, leaving all the men that could be spared, to look after the stock and other property.

The families were moved back, some stopping at ranches along the road, and some going through to the Missouri river.

Within two or three weeks most all the settlers were back on their homesteads, as the Indians had moved west across the Blue River, not getting any closer than the first night.

The residents of Lancaster were never bothered or threatened thereafter by the hostile Indians, although they were bothered for many years with the begging and stealing of the civilized Indians, who were driven back from the hunting grounds by the Sioux and Cheyennes until they were desperate with hunger.