

State Historical Society of Iowa  
Iowa Freedom Trail Grant Project - Biographical Form

Name of Individual or Family: **Smith, Rev. Ammi**

Birth date: 3/6/1803

Birth place: Greene, Kennebec County ME

Death date: 1889

Buried at: Maple Hill Cemetery, College Springs, Page County, IA

Death Place: College Springs, Page County, IA

Pictures of Tombstone

Source:HP file

- African  
 African American  
 Asian  
 Asian American  
 European American  
 Mixed Race (Mulatto, Creole, etc.)  
 American Indian  
 Hispanic American
- Other:

Please check all that apply:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slave                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UGRR Station Master |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom Seeker/Runaway Slave | <input type="checkbox"/> UGRR Conductor/Agent           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free Black                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Abolitionist        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contrabands                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Antislavery         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slave Owner                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Associated with John Brown     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-Abolitionist/Proslavery | <input type="checkbox"/> Associated with James Lane     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kidnappers/Bounty Hunters    | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Status                 |

Member of a National or a State Antislavery Society:  Yes  No

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Antislavery Society | <input type="checkbox"/> Massachusetts Antislavery Society |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Antislavery Society | <input type="checkbox"/> Iowa Antislavery Society          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                       |  |

Member of a Local Antislavery Society in Iowa:  Yes  No

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Denmark (Town) Antislavery Society    | <input type="checkbox"/> Des Moines County Antislavery Society (Iowa)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lee County Antislavery Society (Iowa) | <input type="checkbox"/> Johnson County Antislavery Society (Iowa)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salem (Town) Antislavery Society      | <input type="checkbox"/> Scott County Antislavery Society (Iowa)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Washington (Town) Antislavery Society | <input type="checkbox"/> Crawford Township in Washington County Antislavery Society |

Kansas Free State Cause in Iowa Committee Member:  Yes  No

Agent or Member of the American Home Missionary Society:  Yes  No

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Marriage to:

1. Cyrene Bisbey (Bisbee)  
May 1878

2. Lucy Ann Smith

3.

4.

5.

Location:

Leeds, Kennebec County, ME

Date:

9/15(or17)/1826 b.1802-d.

Profession: Minister, farmer

Education: Common schools

Church Membership: Methodist Episcopal, Wesleyan Methodist

Public Offices:

Local: Justice of the Peace, Fairfield, IL, 1841; Justice of the Peace, Amity Township, Page County, IA, 1857

State:

National:

Political Party:

Military Service:

Civic Organizations:

**Parents:**

Father

Asa Smith

Birth date:

8/22/1765

Death Date:

ca. 1840

Birth date:

8/6/1769

Death Date:

3/18/1814

Birth place:

Tauton/Raynham, Bristol County, MA

Buried at:

Milo, Piscataquis County, ME

Birth place:

Bridgewater, Plymouth County, MA

Buried at:

Greene, Androscoggin, ME

Mother

Jane Niles

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<b>Children:</b>	Birth date:	Birth place:
Almon Smith	July, 1827	East Livermore, ME--d. July, 1827
Charles Smith	7/2/1828	East Livermore, ME--d. July, 1847
Unnamed daughter	1830	East Livermore, ME--d. 1830
Ammi Smith	5/7/1832	East Livermore, ME
Cyrene Smith	8/23/1834	Mile, ME--d. 5/21/1866
Wesley Smith	3/18/1836	Mile, ME
Sultan J. Smith	1/10(or15)/1838	Milo, ME
Annie Francis Smith	8/11/1839	Milo, ME--d. 7/9/1877
Asa Smith	8/12/1841	Fairfield, IL--d. 8/24/1841
Clark T. Smith	8/4/1842	Fairfield, IL
Willie C. Smith	4/8/1845	Fairfield, IL

**Locations of Individual or Family:**

1. Green, Kennebec County, ME
2. East Livermore, ME
3. Milo, ME
4. Fairfield, IL
5. Wheaton, IL
6. Amity (College Springs), Page County, IA
7. Andrew County, MO
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**Dates Present:**

- 1803-1824  
1824-1832  
1832-1839  
1839-1854  
1854-1855  
1855 ca. - 1865-66  
ca. 1865-1866

**References:**

HP File:

U.S. Federal Census, 1860, Iowa, Page County, Amity, p. 989:

[http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Source:Smith\\_Ammi.\\_Memoir\\_of\\_Rev\\_Ammi\\_Smith\\_at....](http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Source:Smith_Ammi._Memoir_of_Rev_Ammi_Smith_at....)

<http://persi/heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/books/results/image/print?urn=urn:....>

<http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/n/i/l/Stephen-S-Niles/GENE12-0062.html>;

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid+6731040>; <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=67310458>; <http://www.rootsweb.com/~iabiog/page/hp1880/h-1880-amity.htm>

**Images of Individual or Family**

Portraits:

Photographs: <http://persi/heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/books/results/image/print?urn+urn...>

**Associated Properties or Places**

Historic Property Name:

Address: (If rural, please provide Section, Township and Range)

Is the property or place extant?  Yes  No

Iowa Site Inventory Number:

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Archaeological Site Number:

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places:  Yes  No Date Listed:

Photographs, Drawings, and Portraits:

Notes:

### Underground Railroad Activities

Rev. Ammi Smith was a station agent on the UGRR in Amity, Page County, Iowa, where he, his wife Cyrene, and son, Clark helped house and feed fugitive slaves. .

References:

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HP file:

[http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Source:Smith\\_Ammi.\\_Memoir\\_of\\_Rev\\_Ammi\\_Smith\\_at...](http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Source:Smith_Ammi._Memoir_of_Rev_Ammi_Smith_at...)

<http://persi/heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/books/results/image/print?urn=urn:....>

<http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/n/i/l/Stephen-S-Niles/GENE12-0062.html>;

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid+6731040>; <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=67310458>;

### Abolitionist or Antislavery Activities

Rev. Ammi Smith was a Wesleyan Methodist preacher who preached continuously against slavery as well as in favor of temperance.

References:

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.HP file:

[http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Source:Smith\\_Ammi.\\_Memoir\\_of\\_Rev\\_Ammi\\_Smith\\_at...](http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Source:Smith_Ammi._Memoir_of_Rev_Ammi_Smith_at...)

<http://persi/heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/books/results/image/print?urn=urn:....>

### Anti-Abolitionist or Proslavery Activities

References:

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### Notes

Rev. Ammi Smith was a Methodist Episcopal and Wesleyan Methodist minister, farmer, abolitionist, and a station agent on the UGRR at Amity (now College Springs), Page County, Iowa. He was born on March 6, 1803 in Green, Kennebec County, Maine (then a part of Massachusetts) and grew up there. His father, Asa Smith, was a horse and cattle farmer and a wheel maker. In 1824, Smith purchased a 105-acre farm in East Livermore, ME. He married Cyrene Bisbee on September 15, 1826 at Leeds, but continued farming at East Livermore. They had eleven children: Almon, Charles, an unnamed daughter, Ammi, Cyrene, Wesley, Sataln J, Annie Francis, Asa, Clark T, and Willie C. Smith

The year after his marriage, Smith attended a Methodist Camp Meeting at Kent's Hill and became a convert to Methodism. Several years later, he was licensed to exhort, and a short while later he was licensed to preach. In his early years as a Methodist preacher, he focused on preaching for temprence and against Masonry. In 1831 or 1832, he sold the farm at Livermore and bought a farm inMilo Township where he farmed and preached until 1838. He then decided to move west and came to Belvidere, Boone County, IL. Smith traveled

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back to Maine to get his family, and they all came to Belvidere in the spring of 1839. He rented a farm seven miles south of Belvidere for one year and then bought his own farm near Fairfield and also continued preaching. In 1841 he was elected Justice of the Peace in Fairfield.

In 1844, the slavery controversy caused divisions in the Methodist Church, with the Wesleyan Methodists leaving the main body in order to pursue a more anti-slavery agenda. Smith was already a strong anti-slavery advocate and joined the Wesleyans at that time. He helped to establish new Wesleyan congregations in Illinois during the following years. In the early 1850s he moved to Wheaton, IL. so his children could be educated at Wheaton College, a well-known anti-slavery institution. In 1855 he left Wheaton to move to the new community of Amity in Page County, Iowa. His was just the third family to move into Amity where he built a house the following year. He also bought land and raised crops and livestock.

In Amity he was elected a trustee of the new Amity College in that town. Also, in 1857, he was elected Justice of the Peace of Amity Township. During these early years the he lived in Amity, he became a station agent for the UGRR. His son, Clark T. Smith, who also worked as a conductor on the UGRR at this time, recalled an incident in his old age about how he and his parents helped a fugitive slave. One day in the late summer of 1857, Clark was taking their cattle out to the pasture to graze when he saw a tall black man who was a fugitive slave. They looked at each other in stunned silence for a moment, and then Clark asked him if he had been there all night. The man replied that he had traveled during the night to evade the slave hunters. Clark asked him if he had had breakfast to which he replied no. Clark then took him to the house and called his mother (Cyrene) to the door and asked her to get the fugitive some breakfast. When she invited the fugitive into the house, he drew back, saying he could eat outside. "Mother then went to the door and said gently, "That's all right. Come right on in, we will be glad to have you." He went into the house and Clark noticed how "that poor, half-starved negro did eat! It certainly did our hearts good to see the relish with which his food disappeared, and to feel a gratified sense of our own instrumentality to some extent his sufferings." The fugitive said that he had come from more than a hundred miles south of St. Joseph, MO, and that he had escaped because of rumors that slaves would be sold south because of the problems in Kansas. The family gave him some more food and sent him on his way. Unfortunately, he was caught by two Clarinda residents who brought him back to his owner.

On another occasion, Clark was helping a group of UGRR people to move fugitive slaves when they arrived at his parents' home. Ammi immediately sent word through the neighborhood and asked them to supply food for the fugitives. Also, fare amounts of food were found piled on Cyrene's table. The fugitives were brought into the house and they and the UGRR posse were fed. Shortly thereafter several other men, divided the fugitives into several groups and moved them on.

In the spring of 1861, Ammi moved to Central City, Colorado Territory, with several relatives from the Amity area. They engaged in mining and he continued preaching. They came back to Amity the following year. He went to Colorado again in 1863, but again returned home when Clark joined the 4<sup>th</sup> Iowa Infantry. Another son, Willis, joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Iowa Cavalry. In 1865 or 1866, Ammi moved to Andrew County, MO and farmed there for about 1 1/2 years. He then moved to Holt County, MO, where he lived for about four or five years, mostly preaching. He moved back to Colorado about 1873, but his daughter Annie died there in 1877, his wife, Cyrene died there in 1878, and his own health began to fail. He moved back to Amity (now College Springs) and traveled to Leavenworth, KS, and renewed an acquaintance with an old friend from many years before. Lucy Ann Smith. They married on May 5, 1879 and moved back to College Springs. They lived there until his death in 1889. Rev. Ammi Smith was interred in Maple Hill Cemetery in College Springs, IA.

References:

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HP File:

U.S. Federal Census, 1860, Iowa, Page County, Amity, p. 989:

[http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Source:Smith\\_Ammi.\\_Memoir\\_of\\_Rev\\_Ammi\\_Smith\\_at....](http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Source:Smith_Ammi._Memoir_of_Rev_Ammi_Smith_at....)

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<http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/n/i/l/Stephen-S-Niles/GENE12-0062.html>;  
<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page+gr&GRid+6731040>; <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=67310458>; <http://www.rootsweb.com/~iabiog/page/hp1880/h-1880-amity.htm>.

**Connections**

Casper Meade Johnson, W.J.Woods, James Laughlin, J.S. Woodmansee, thomas Woodmansee, Marquis Marrow, Judson Laughlin, Clark Smith, James Short, Rev. B.F. Haskins, Rev. John Cross, George Gibbs, Martin Misbee, Stover Hilton, Isaac Felch, George McCullough, John Anderson, Rev. Lowery, Rev. Jaquiss, Mr. Donaldson, and Ebenezer C. Noe.

References:

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HP files

**Association with John Brown**

None known

References:

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**Association with James Lane**

References:

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**Researchers**

Information in File Compiled By:

Name(s)  
David Holmgren

Date:

**Updates**

Information:

Name(s)

Date:

Information:

Name(s)

Date:

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