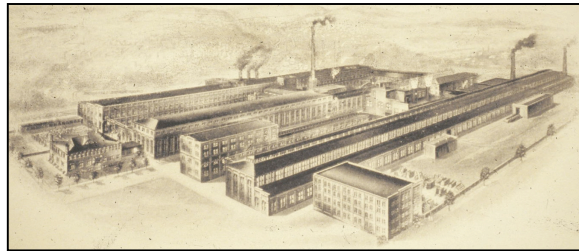


BIOGRAPHY
of
STEPHEN MORGAN SMITH

February 1, 1839 – April 12, 1903



Pastor, inventor, entrepreneur, industrialist...with the highest standards of work ethics, integrity and faith

Author Unknown
Circa 1903

Stephen Morgan Smith was born February 1st 1839 in Davie County, North Carolina. He was the eldest son of John Wesley and Sarah Purden Smith, and was of Scotch Irish, English and French descent. His parents and paternal grandfather were also born in that county. His great-grandfather on his mother's side was born in Frederick, Maryland, while his great-great-grandfather was one of the famous Beauchamp family of France, who had emigrated to America and settled in Frederick, Maryland.

Samuel Smith, his paternal grandfather, was a man of ability as a public speaker, and a minister of very high reputation in the Methodist church. With preaching, he combined agricultural pursuits, and although not an old man when he died, was able to give each of his children a plantation. His death was much lamented, and his memory still lives among the people of that county. He married Jennie Gordon, of Irish descent, who was said to have been a very beautiful woman.

His father, John Wesley Smith, was kind hearted, easy going and hospitable almost to a fault, while his mother Sarah Purden Beauchamp Smith was a strong minded, energetic and industrious woman. She strove faithfully to bring up her children aright, and was very careful in the management of her household affairs. She also spun and wove on their own looms the cotton, flax and wool from which she made the clothing of the family. This required much labor of which we know but little at this age of events.

Stephen Morgan was very young when his grandfather Samuel Smith died, but it seemed as though his mantle had fallen on this grandson, for when a very young child, he

manifested a disposition for doing things, and helping his mother in her many household duties. To him fell the chopping of the wood for the family fires, and kindling them at four o'clock in the morning. I would like to mention many other things which he did when a boy, but have not space here to enumerate. However, I mention with pride his great admiration for his mother, and all through life spoke of her with the greatest love and veneration.

He was fond of going to school, but this privilege was denied him except on rainy days when the weather would not permit of working on the farm. Notwithstanding the difficulties with which he had to contend, he used every opportunity for acquiring knowledge, usually spending his evenings studying by the light of a pine knot torch.

He was ever an affectionate and faithful son, willing to do all and more than was required of him; therefore, his father, at the age of eighteen, allowed him to pursue his studies provided he furnish a man to do his work on the farm until he reached the age of twenty-one. To this, he cheerfully assented, as he was desirous to make money that he might defray his expenses at Chapel Hill College.

Soon after this, he was urged to study for the ministry of the Moravian Church, of which denomination his mother was a member. After making it a subject of much prayer, he decided to do so, and entered the Moravian College at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and afterwards the theological department at the same place.

Being a very industrious student and having an unusually bright mind, and a retentive memory, his progress in acquiring knowledge was very remarkable.

Several years after this, the civil war broke out, and he with a number of other students from the South, were advised by the president of the college to remain North and finish their studies. This advice pleased him, particularly as he was republican in his feelings, and strongly opposed to the institution of slavery.

Some time after this, a vacancy having occurred in the church at York, he was asked to take charge of the same, and was ordained a deacon of the Moravian Church by bishop Peter Noolle. He served this congregation as pastor with much acceptance from 1861 until 1866, and here on the 9th of April 1862, he was married by Bishop Peter Noolle to Emma R. Fahs, daughter of the late John & Susan Fahs.

In 1864, he was elected Chaplain of the 200th Pennsylvania volunteers, and served in this capacity until the end of the war. In 1866, he accepted an appointment as pastor of the church at Canal Dover, where he labored with his accustomed zeal and energy.

He paid much attention to the preparation of his sermons, and was fearless in denouncing sin from the pulpit, for which he gained the admiration and respect of all who knew him, so that his church was always crowded and at the evening services, it was filled to overflowing.

In 1871, he was compelled to give up the work he so dearly loved, on account of serious throat trouble, returning to York with his family. His future outlook at this time was decidedly gloomy. His health was apparently gone, and he had neither money, nor

knowledge of business with which to help himself, besides having the support of his family and sister resting upon him.

While at Canal Dover, he had invented a washing machine for use in his own family, as help was very scarce. People who saw it were so pleased with the practicability of the machine that he felt encouraged to have it patented and manufactured; and sold by agents throughout the country; and he was astonished at the very great demand for it.

The success which he met in this new enterprise, together with the outdoor exercise attending it, caused his general health to improve, but his throat always remained weak, so that he had to guard it with much care.

At this business, he made many thousands of dollars but his kindly nature, and confidence in humanity caused him to endorse notes for friends and, thereby, he lost about forty thousand dollars.

Not having a love for the washing machine industry, he decided to try something else, and put remaining funds, together with his patents, into a stock company, which was forming at that time, and known as the "York Manufacturing Company". This was an unfortunate venture for him, as most of the men connected with the enterprise were unreliable and unprincipled, and after being with them for sometime, and becoming thoroughly disgusted with their actions, he decided to leave the company, but in doing so, lost all the money he invested in it, which left him poorer than he had ever been in his life.

At this juncture he was much discouraged. Nevertheless, his ardent love for his family and his indomitable will, together with sympathy and encouragement from friends, caused him to put forth Herculean efforts and start afresh in a new business. The time which he spent in the aforesaid company was given in part to the superintending of the construction of the "Bollinger Turbine" wheel. Having naturally a mechanical turn of mind, he saw much wherein these could be improved, and after separating from them, he resolved to build a different wheel, and giving the subject much thought, he invented the Turbine wheel know as the "Success". To have these wheels built and brought before the public was no little undertaking, especially as he had no shops, and no money with which to do it. But, by some financial assistance from my family, and his very great exertions, self denials, and determination, matters gradually grew better, and he was enabled to build shops. Like the Oak which springs from a tiny acorn and in years becomes a great tree, so that the birds lodge in its branches, and is more deeply rooted by the storms which assail it, so this business by the help of God and his sons, grew and expanded until it became one of the well known industries of the land.

Besides the manufacturing of turbine wheels, he was interested in a number of other enterprises, the most important of which was the Atlanta Water and Electrical Co. – of which he was president, - also the Delta Power and Light Company, and several mills and a gold mine in Arizona, by which, because of the dishonesty and rascality of two of the prominent stockholders connected therewith, he lost many thousands of dollars, which weighed very heavily on his mind.

One of the greatest trials which assailed him was the great financial crises of 1892 and 1893. But being a particularly good financier, he was enabled to pull through

successfully, and it was a source of great gratification to him in after years to look back through all his business transactions, and be able to say, that never did he have a note or business paper go to protest.

However, these great strains were not without their effect upon his health, for they left him in a very nervous condition, so that it was with much difficulty he could sleep, and doctors advised him to rest from his labors. In order to simplify matters, so business could be continued without interruption, in case of his death, he formed the S. Morgan Smith concern into a stock company, which still bears his name. Of this, he gave each child a portion, reserving the controlling interest for himself.

His sons, now being able to transact business, he left home from time to time, helping to regain his health, and it was during one of his frequent visits to his son Beauchamp in California, that the Angel of death called him from time into eternity.

All through his business career he was a faithful member of the congregation which he had served with his first ministrations. It often became his pleasure to preach to them the word of life (and also to other denominations) and always assisted in the administration of the Holy Communion. He served as Superintendent of the Sunday School for twenty years, and was president of the board of trustees of the church for thirty years, or until the time of his death. His religious activities were not confined to his own church, as he was president of the York County Sunday school association, frequently visiting the various schools throughout the county and speaking at conventions on behalf of Sunday Schools and the temperance cause. He belonged to the ministerial association, and was an influential member of the Board of Trustees of Linden Hall Seminary at Lititz, Pennsylvania.

He took an active part in the school board at York. During his term of service, the "Garfield", "Stevens" and high school buildings were erected, in all of which he took the deepest interest.

He was a member of the General John Sedgwick Post No. 87 and president of the society for prevention of cruelty to animals. His name was sought for many positions of trust and honors, but on account of failing health, he was obliged to refuse them. He was in much sympathy with the negro race, because in the country where he was reared he saw much of the cruelty and injustice, with which they were treated, so that he became their friend, and assisted them whenever he could.

To be at home with his family and loved ones was his delight. To him the club room had no attractions. He was always a devoted husband, and a kind and affectionate father, and his pleasure was to make them happy. His tastes were of a literary nature, was a very ready pensman, and enjoyed reading good books, poetry being particularly fascinating to him. He loved music, and when troubled and worried it would often soothe his nerves to quietness and rest. He endeavored to bring up his children in the way they should go, and set them the example by walking therein himself.

It seems sad that, after having labored so hard and long, and reached a period in life when he might have taken rest, that he should die so soon. He had many things to live for, and was desirous to live, but God's way are not our ways, and what He doeth now we know not, but are told we shall know hereafter. In the summer of 1902 it was thought

advisable that he go to California again on account of his failing health. There is appeared to improve for a time, but in February a serious illness befell him which weakened his heart action very much, and the doctors told us he could not live long. He, however, rallied for a time, but it was not long before we saw him growing weaker and weaker, and he himself realized his condition, and lamented that he was so far from home, and unable to see his sons, Elmer and Fahs, and other members of the family.

He asked us not to speak to him of worldly things as he wished to give his thoughts to prayer and serious meditation. On another occasion, he remarked, "I want God's will to be done, and not mine, and I want to be entirely resigned to His will." He also spoke of Christ being his hope of glory, and on Easter day, when the church militant was celebrating the resurrection of our risen Savior, and as we were gathered around him, his spirit took its flight to join the church triumphant, and as it did so, he exclaimed, "Oh the mercy and joy and glorious light of God!" which vision he no doubt saw, as the heavenly portals opened to receive him into Glory.