PROJECT SCROLL RESEARCH NOTE 2026-45

The Pioneer Society's families at the building of the cabin, 1923: the officers of 1873 and the speakers and givers of Cabin Building Day

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SUMMARY

The Cass County Pioneer Society was founded at Cassopolis, Michigan, in 1873; fifty years later its revived successor built the Pioneer Log Cabin on Stone Lake. The cabin's own history names the people of Cabin Building Day, 23 May 1923, without saying who they were. The county histories and newspapers show that many were the Society's own children. Its first assistant secretary in 1873, John Tietsort, was the son of Abram Tietsort Jr., who in 1830 "built a small log cabin on the east bank of Stone Lake"; John's widow, Addie, was present on Building Day. Its first treasurer, Joseph Smith, was almost certainly the county's Major Joseph Smith, from whose homestead the cabin's first log came. The village president who spoke that day, Asa K. Hayden, was a son of James G. Hayden, one of the Society's officers in 1917; the other speaker, Charles H. Kimmerle, was a son of Henry Kimmerle, very probably the Henry Kimmerle who was the Society's president in 1888. Joseph K. Ritter, who later helped reopen the cabin, was the son of Charles A. Ritter, the revived Society's treasurer in 1924. And Katherine Armstrong Morgan, who gave casings for the cabin's doors and windows, was almost certainly the only child of the givers of its first log, Mr. and Mrs. A. N. Armstrong.

THE RECORD

1. **Alfred Mathews, *History of Cass County, Michigan* (Chicago: Waterman, Watkins & Co., 1882), p. 141: the Pioneer Society's first officers**

   > *"President, Uzziel Putnam, Sr.; Vice President, George Meacham; Secretary, A. B. Copley; Assistant Secretary, John Tietsort; Treasurer, Joseph Smith."*

   Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/historyofcasscou00wate)

2. **Mathews, ibid., p. 154: the founding of the village of Cassopolis**

   > *"In 1830, Abram Tietsort, Jr. (father of John Tietsort), built a small log cabin on the east bank of Stone Lake"*

   Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/historyofcasscou00wate)

3. **Mathews, ibid., biographical sketch "Joseph Smith"**

   > *"The late Joseph Smith, commonly spoken of by old settlers as Maj. Smith, was born in Botetourt County, Va., April 11, 1809."*

   Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/historyofcasscou00wate)

4. **Marcia Gaskin, comp., *1923 Pioneer Log Cabin Museum Searchable Donor List* (Cassopolis, 2012), unpaginated: Cabin Building Day, 23 May 1923**

   > *"Charles O. Harmon welcomed the crowd and introduced the speakers: Asa K. Hayden, Village President and Charles H. Kimmerle a citizen. Present was Mrs Addie Tietsort who owned the original parchment deed for the land."*

   Pioneer Log Cabin Museum, Cassopolis; scan at the Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/pioneer_log_cabin_museum_text_searchable1a)

5. **"J. G. Hayden Buried at Cassopolis Monday," *South Bend News-Times*, 17 July 1917, p. 10**

   > *James G. Hayden's five children: "They are Asa K., attorney of this place, ... "*

   Library of Congress, Chronicling America · See the record (https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn87055779/1917-07-17/ed-1/?sp=10)

6. **"Cass County Pioneer Society," in the county societies' reports, *Michigan History Magazine* 1:1 (1917)**

> *The officers listed include "James G. Hayden, Cassopolis."*

Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/sim_michigan-history_1917-03_1_1)

7. **L. H. Glover, ed., *A Twentieth Century History of Cass County, Michigan* (Chicago: Lewis, 1906), p. 432: "Charles H. Kimmerle"; and pp. 349–351, the Society's presidents**

> *Kimmerle was "a son of Henry and Mary J. (Hain) Kimmerle"; the list of presidents reads "1888 — Henry Kimmerle."*

Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/twentiethcentury00glov)

8. **"Cassopolis Youth Weds in Louisiana," *South Bend News-Times*, 1 June 1930, p. 10**

> *"The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ritter." (the groom, Joseph K. Ritter)*

Library of Congress, Chronicling America · See the record (https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn87055779/1930-06-01/ed-1/?sp=10)

9. **Gaskin, ibid.: the Cass County Pioneer and Historical Society's letterhead, 1924**

> *"B. F. Thompson, President Charles A. Ritter, Treasurer"*

Pioneer Log Cabin Museum, Cassopolis; scan at the Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/pioneer_log_cabin_museum_text_searchable1a)

10. **Glover, ibid., p. 455: "A. N. Armstrong"**

> *"One child has been born of this marriage, Katharine, whose birth occurred in 1884."*

Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/twentiethcentury00glov)

1. **Cassopolis column, *South Bend News-Times*, 30 October 1915 (Chronicling America image 7)**

   > *"Mrs. R. O. Morgan of South Bend is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. N. Armstrong."*

   Library of Congress, Chronicling America · See the record (https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn87055779/1915-10-30/ed-1/?sp=7)

2. **Gaskin, ibid.: the gifts of wood for the cabin's fittings**

   > *"Katherine Armstrong Morgan, Side casings on middle door, upstairs," with other casings, stops and jambs for the cabin's windows and doors.*

   Pioneer Log Cabin Museum, Cassopolis; scan at the Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/pioneer_log_cabin_museum_text_searchable1a)

WHAT IT CHANGES

The commemoration of 1923 can be read as a family occasion of the old Society. The first assistant secretary's widow stood beside the lake where his father had built the first cabin of Cassopolis; the first treasurer's granddaughter gave the first log, and her daughter the casings; the speakers and a later keeper were sons of the Society's officers of 1888, 1917 and 1924.

LIMITS

The identification of the treasurer of 1873 with Major Joseph Smith is a reading: Mathews gives the treasurer no rank, and the name was common. That the Henry Kimmerle of Glover's list of presidents was Charles H. Kimmerle's father is likewise a reading, though Glover knows only one Henry Kimmerle. Katherine Armstrong Morgan is identified by her names, the Armstrongs' one daughter and the 1915 visit of

"Mrs. R. O. Morgan"; no record seen names her as the daughter in so many words. The 1917 report in *Michigan History* lists Hayden among the officers without his office.

WHAT WE SEARCHED BEFORE CALLING IT NEW

The cabin's booklet of 2012 (Gaskin); the cabin museum's and the Cass County Historical Society's pages; articles of 2003–2013 in the *Leader* (Dowagiac); Mathews (1882) and Glover (1906); *Michigan History*, 1917–1925; Chronicling America for the families named; web searches. None connects the Society's officers of 1873 or later with the speakers, guests and givers of 1923.

Our standard for calling a finding new is set out in How we research (projectscroll.com/how-we-research/), and how we weigh each kind of record in Scrollsigns (projectscroll.com/scrollsigns/).

"New" means new to print as far as we can tell. If you know of an earlier publication, tell us and we will credit it here and raise the note's version.

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WORKS CITED

Earlier work, catalogues and databases named in this note, besides the records quoted above.

1. Michael Urbanski, “The cabin a county built,” *Project Scroll* (2026), Part 2 of the series on the Cass County Pioneer Society. https://projectscroll.com/news/the-cabin-a-county-built/
2. Michael Urbanski, “A museum before there was a museum,” *Project Scroll* (2026), Part 1 of the series on the Cass County Pioneer Society. https://projectscroll.com/news/a-museum-before-there-was-a-museum/

THE FULL STORY

The finding is set out in context, with the rest of its sources, in The cabin a county built (projectscroll.com/news/the-cabin-a-county-built/). In the discoveries register:

- `society-families-1923` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#society-families-1923)
- `armstrong-morgan` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#armstrong-morgan)

HOW TO CITE THIS NOTE

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