

A Window into Midland's Past: Simons owned Coleman Shingle Mill

Compiled from the 1884 Portrait and Biographical album by Gary F. Skory

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Editor's note: The Midland (MI) County Historical Society is partnering with the Midland Daily News for "A Window to Midland's Past," which features historical pieces in print and online at ourmidland.com. This particular piece was compiled by retired historical society director Gary Skory. It was originally published on Aug. 26, 1993.

T.B. Simons, farmer, merchant and shingle manufacturer, residing in Coleman, Warren Township, was born October 19, 1846 in Aylmer, Ontario, Canada.

The father of Mr. Simons was born Oct. 19, 1810, in West Flamboro, Canada and died in Aylmer, Ontario, in June 1868, and was of Scotch descent. The mother, Margaret (Hopkins) Simons was born June 22, 1812 in East Flamboro and is of English and German descent. She is living with her son, the subject of this notice, with whom she has resided for seven years. The father's family consisted of eight children, all of whom lived to the age of maturity except two. One died at the age of four years and the other in infancy.

T.B. Simons, the subject of this biographical notice, remained under the parental roof until he attained the age of 17 years, when he came to this state, but shortly afterwards, on the death of his father, returned to Canada and assisted his mother in conducting a bakery, which his father had left, for a few years.

In 1870 he came back to Midland County and with the exception of one year has resided here ever since. He was united in marriage July 3, 1876 to **Mary E. Hubble**, [ME# 6508] daughter of **S.W.(Samuel William) and Lorinda (Bennett) Hubbell**. Her father's family was the second to locate on the present site of Coleman, this county. Ira Adams and his family being the first and only settling three days previous to Mr. Hubbell.

The railroad was not completed to Coleman when Mrs. Simon's parents settled there, and the hand of improvement was hardly visible. He brought the first shingle mill to that place (Mr. Ira Adams the first saw mill) and the family of Mr. Hubbell underwent all the trials of pioneer life. They lived in a tent for six weeks, and during the entire time were not discommoded by rain. Mr. Hubbell's family consisted of 15 children. He lived in Coleman, for seven years and then moved to Tuscola County, where he engaged in farming.

Mary Simons was born June 11, 1857, in "Big Flats," Chemung, County, New York. She has borne four children to her husband, two of whom are deceased. The living are Frank William, born Feb. 19, 1882 in Coleman, and an infant, born Feb. 29, 1884 at Coleman. The deceased are Gertrude, born April 6, 1877, and died Feb. 14, 1879, and Leonard, born Sept. 11, 1880 and died Sept. 17, 1882.

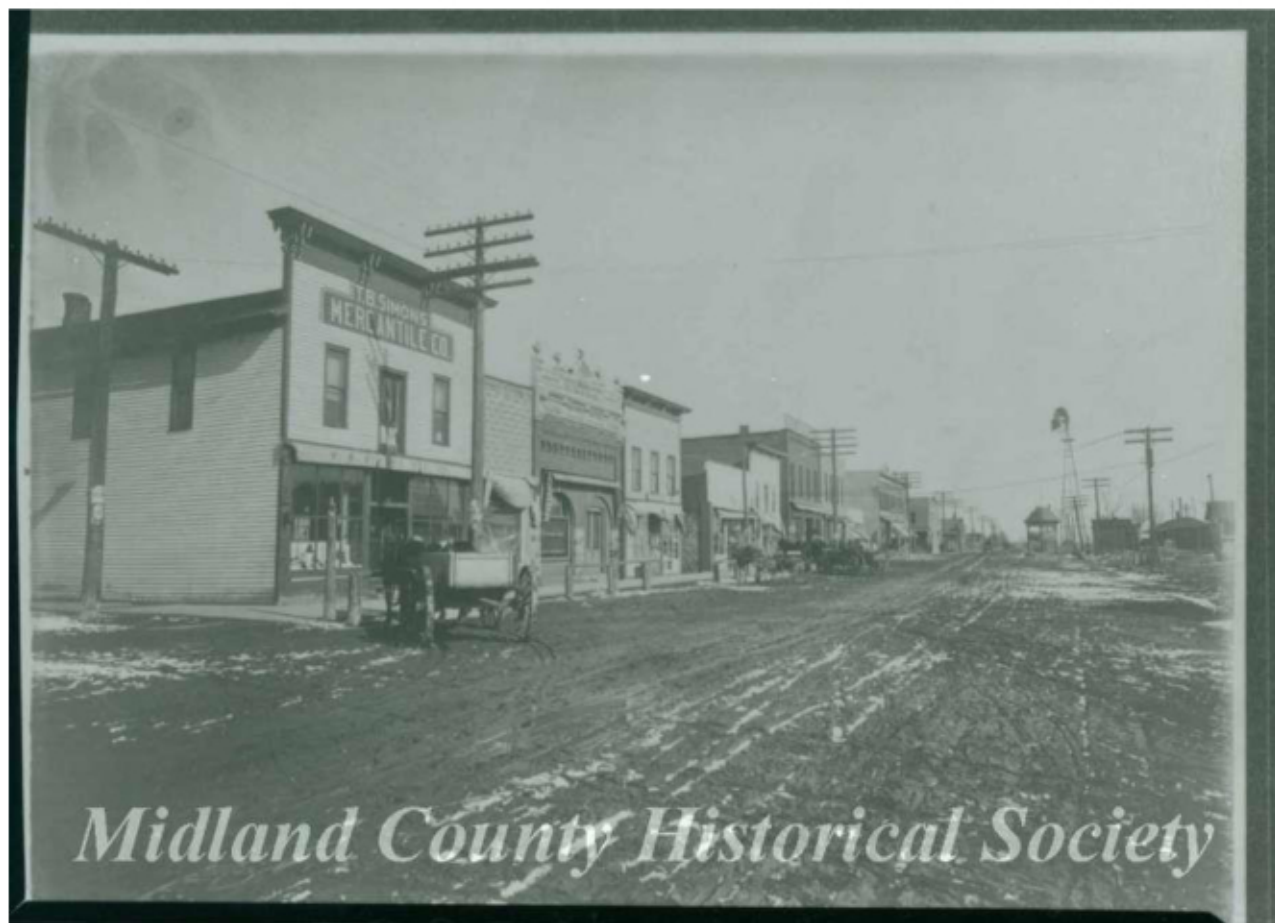
After his marriage to Miss Hubbell, Mr. Simons took his bride to Saginaw and was there engaged in buying and selling shingles and in conducting the running of a shingle mill as employee for about a year. He then returned to Coleman in 1877 and took charge of the mill his father-in-law, Mr. Hubble, had erected at that place and lived in the same house his father-in-law had vacated. He soon afterwards purchased the mill property and ran it for his own profit.

Mr. Simon is a true representative in a financial point of view, of what energy and perseverance, backed by good judgment can accomplish. He started life's journey with comparatively nothing,

and by energetic effort has banished want from the household, and content sits in the lap of plenty around the family hearthstone.

He owns a shingle mill three miles north of Coleman and store building stocked with goods. His landed interest include some 1,700 acres, 600 of which is pine timber land and 1,100 acres of hardwood. It is calculated there is some six or seven million feet of pine lumber on his 600 acres, and he is constantly engaged – the year round – in converting this timber into lumber. The capacity of his shingle mill per day is 45,000 feet, for the last three years; and Mr. Simons contemplates the utilization of most of his timber in that way.

Mr. Simons has been township treasurer for two terms, and was highway commissioner last year. He belongs to that class of citizens who are regarded as a benefit rather than a hindrance to the community in which they live and is identified with the moving, advancing element residing in his township.



T.B. Simons Mercantile Co. on Main Street in Coleman.