

# JOHNSON

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## Block 11, Lot 13 De Smet Cemetery

In the LITTLE HOUSE books, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson appear only as one of the older couples at the dime sociable attended by Laura Ingalls and Mary Power. Two of their children, Minnie Johnson and her brother Arthur, are frequently mentioned as Laura Ingalls' friends and classmates, with Minnie included in Laura's closest circle as the seatmate of Mary Power.

Only mentioned once in *Pioneer Girl*, Minnie Johnson was said to be one of the "younger girls in school." It's probable that her character in the LITTLE HOUSE books is based on Genevieve Masters, who in real life, was a close friend of Mary Power.

## TIMOTHY HOYT JOHNSON

Unknown burial, possibly De Smet Cemetery where tree is next to Susan

February 15, 1815 – September 24, 1897; died at age 82

Son of Joseph Johnson and Mary Hugh.

Husband of (1) Mary Stevens, (2) Susan Williamson, (3) Mary (Sanders) Post.

Father of: Sarah, Almon, Otis, Arthur, Minnie, Lee.

Wagon maker and wheelwright. Farmer.

Timothy Hoyt Johnson was born in Bradford, Vermont, February 15, 1815. Raised in New Hampshire, he learned the wheelwright and wagon-maker's trades. A deeply religious man, Mr. Johnson was an active member of the Methodist Episcopal church for over sixty years. He was married three times: by his first wife, Mary Jane Stevens (she died in 1849, shortly after the family moved to Fayette, Wisconsin), he had a daughter, Sarah. The Johnson home was across the road from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and although the church is still there, the house is no longer standing. The Johnsons also had a farm on the outskirts of Fayette, twenty-seven acres that were the W-SW-SE 5-3-4 and seven acres that were the N-NW-NE 5-3-4.

Timothy Johnson and his second wife, Susan Williamson, had five children: Almon, Otis Joseph, Arthur Ellsworth, Lee, and Minnie Jane. In the spring of 1880, Johnson and sons Almon and Otis filed on homesteads several miles north of De Smet in Kingsbury County, Dakota Territory, but they returned to Wisconsin for the worst of the Hard Winter. Timothy also filed a tree claim and purchased two lots in De Smet, Lots 2 and 3, Block 2, on the west side of Joliet Avenue. He built a wagon shop and blacksmith shop, with a house for his family to the south.



In the fall of 1882, Johnson relinquished his homestead and filed on another homestead a mile south of Charles Ingalls. When Arthur turned twenty-one, his father relinquished the tree claim and Arthur filed on it himself. Final proof was made on the second homestead in June 1888. It's possible that this claim would have been turned over to son Lee, but Susan Johnson died in May 1887 at age 59; she was buried in the De Smet cemetery.

Timothy Johnson returned to Wisconsin the next year, marrying Mary Post in Darlington in early 1889. They came back to De Smet to live:

*March 23, 1889. The De Smet LEADER.*

*T.H. Johnson returned from Wisconsin last Thursday, bringing a wife with him. They have the best wishes of the LEADER.*

Although Minnie lived with her brother Otis while teaching school near Spirit Lake briefly, quite soon, Arthur and Lee and Minnie headed west to Oregon via Washington State, Arthur cancelling his homestead in September 1889. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson lived in the house on Joliet and were quite active in church work, with Mary Johnson becoming president of the W.C.T.U. They also traveled quite a bit, including a visit to the World's Fair. Timothy Johnson died in De Smet in September 1897 and was buried in the De Smet cemetery (his grave is unmarked). Following her husband's death, Mary Johnson sold the house and wagon shop and moved to Minnesota to live with a sister. Almon Johnson moved back to Wisconsin and Otis to Kentucky. It doesn't appear if any of the Johnson children ever returned to De Smet to visit.

*October 1, 1897. Kingsbury County INDEPENDENT.*

*Obituary. Timothy Hoyt Johnson was born in Bradford, Vermont, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1815. His parents, in 1816, moved to Dary, New Hampshire and resided there until 1838; was married in 1837 to Mary Stevens, who died in 1849. Here in a revival of religion he became interested about his soul's welfare and peace. He was graciously converted and united in membership with the Methodist Episcopal church. In the same year ye was appointed a class leader. In 1841 he removed to Methuers, Mass. There not being a Methodist Episcopal church there he united with the Free Will Baptist Church. In 1844 he removed to Lawrence Mass. In 1848 he removed to Fayette Wis. And there reunited with the Methodist Episcopal church. In 1854 he was married to Susan Williamson. He came to De Smet South Dakota in 1880. Mrs. Johnson died here in great peace and triumph in 1887. March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1888, he was married to Mary Post who survives him and who has so continually and faithfully ministered to him in his sickness both day and night. For several years his strength has been failing and one by one his powers have yielded to the inevitable. Always rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, fervent in religious devotions. Finally, the summons came, and his weary and worn spirit went up to God, and the body so long its tenement we shall soon place within the long last home, until the resurrection morning. He was for 60 years a member of the Methodist Episcopal church and 42 years a class leader and 8 years a trustee. Until poor health forbid he was regular at church service especially helpful in the prayer meeting. Always a devout listener to his pastor's messages. Hearty in response to gospel power as it filled his soul. Through his long and painful illness he so often quoted the scriptures so dear to him and many of the old Methodist hymns so familiar. It was an inspiration to hear him in his last days talk so confidently of his hopes beyond. In his clearest and most supreme moments he would repeat over and over again "Oh! who wouldn't be ready? Oh! who wouldn't be ready?" Then again with the halo of heaven upon his face say "For the time of my departure is at hand---My*

departure is at hand. Oh! Glory to His name!" It would seem as if he saw and heard what we did not and no one could for a moment doubt the presence of the "Angels of God." At last, quietly, he passed away in peace at ten o'clock Friday evening Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, 1897. Age, 82 years 7 months and 6 days. The funeral services were held on Sabbath afternoon at 3 o'clock at the Methodist church conducted by his pastor, Rev. Francis J. Norton, who delivered an appropriate sermon from Job 5-26, "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age like a shock of corn cometh in, in its season." Rev. T.G. Langdale and Rev. W. Ross assisted in the services. The church was crowded with people who paid their respects to the memory of the deceased and expressed their sympathy to the ones bereft.

## SUSAN (WILLIAMSON) JOHNSON

Block 11, Lot 13 De Smet Cemetery

April 5, 1828 – May 24, 1887; died at age 59

May 28, 1887. *The De Smet NEWS.*

*Died. On May 24, 1887, from dropsy of the heart, Mrs. Timothy H. Johnson, aged 59 years.*

*The funeral was held at the M.E. church on Thursday, conducted by Rev. F.H. Wheeler. The entire community extend sympathies to the bereaved family.*

*Obituary. Susan Williamson was born in Mercy County, Penn., April 5, 1828. She removed with her parents to Wisconsin in 1845. At a Methodist camp meeting, held in Fayette, Wis., in 1850, she was converted, but as she was then in the home of a family who were members of the Free Will Baptist church, she joined that church. In August 1850 she was married to Timothy H. Johnson. She remained a member of the Baptist church, though usually attending the Methodist church, until she removed with her husband to De Smet, when she brought her letter to the M.E. church of this place. They were among the early settlers of De Smet, hence she was well known here, and all who knew her respected her as a Christian woman. During her sickness, previous to her death, she gave indications of an unshaken trust in God, and for a time seemed in direct intercourse with the heavenly company. She passed from earth on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, the funeral services being conducted by her pastor, Rev. F.H. Wheeler. She left a husband, one daughter and four sons to mourn her loss.*



Susan, wife of T.H. Johnson, died May 24, 1887, aged 59 years, 1 month, 19 days

## **MARY W. (SANDERS) POST JOHNSON**

Parents: David Sanders and Susan Wakefield. Married Timothy Johnson March 5, 1889.

## **ALMON H. JOHNSON**

Married Hattie Bailey, four children. Died June 29, 1915 in Monroe (Green Co.) Wisconsin

## **JOSEPH OTIS JOHNSON**

Born October 14, 1855. Married Adora in May 1897 and returned to De Smet, but moved to Louisville KY in October and also lived in Wisconsin. Had daughter Stella. Died December 12, 1915 in Kentucky.

## **ARTHUR JOHNSON**

Born March 15, 1865. Married Chloe Dean, December 20, 1891, in Tacoma. In Portland in 1893 working in lab of lumber company. Son Earl born in 1896. Chloe died 1908 in California. Married Margaret Hinsdale. Died March 16, 1943, in California.

## **LEE JOHNSON**

Born August 15, 1867. In Sumner County, Washington in 1891. Fruit farmer, married May. Died October 11, 1941, in Sumner, resident for 50 years.

## **MINNIE JANE (JOHNSON) HOWARD**

Born Minnie Jane Johnson in Lafayette County, Wisconsin, on October 3, 1869, Minnie was almost two years younger than Laura Ingalls. In the De Smet Little House books, she is included in Laura's close circle of friends, although it's possible that Wilder used Minnie's name and personality as the replacement for Gennie Masters. The Johnsons came to Kingsbury County in 1880. Trained as a wheelwright, Timothy Johnson had a wagon shop in De Smet in addition to homesteading. The Johnsons lived in a house on Joliet Avenue when not on the claim.

Minnie's mother died in May 1887 and although it's not mentioned in the Little House books that Minnie had any aspirations to become a teacher, following her father's marriage to Mary Post in March 1889, Minnie taught Spirit Lake Township School No. 2 from April 14 to July 10, most likely boarding with her brother Otis on his homestead east of Mud Lake. Minnie then moved to Portland, Oregon with her brother Arthur, who had taken a job there. Arthur married Chloe Dean in 1891, and Minnie married Henry Albert Howard at Arthur's home on December 18, 1894. Henry and Minnie lived in Portland for many years, where Henry was a bank janitor. They had three sons: Henry (1896), John (1898), and Harold (1902). Minnie died of heart trouble on October 6, 1919, in Portland.

