

When I started researching the Simon family in 1980 I had never heard of Valentine Simons. I heard of a Father Lyons, a retired priest, who had done research on the early Catholic families of Kentucky, and contacted him to see what I could find. Father Lyons sent me a copy of the marriage bond for the marriage of Martin Webb (John Webb the father) and Margaret Painter (Joseph Painter the father), in Hardin County, May 14, 1799. Valentine Simons was surety on the marriage bond.

I next found Valentine Simons in the deed books of Warren County. Valentine had been awarded a land warrant for 200 acres of land on the Green River in 1798, and the land was surveyed for him in September, 1799. The deeds regarding this 200 acres, and the two caves which were found on the property, will follow.

Valentine Simons does not appear on any census of Kentucky, Illinois, or Missouri. We have kept up with his movement only through the tax records, but there are some years in which he does not appear. Since Valentine first appeared in 1797, we have to assume he was at least twenty-one years old in that year.

Valentine is an apparent son of John Simons, Sr. and an unknown wife, or he could have been a brother of John. Valentine Simons was married to Annie (Nancy), daughter of John Durbin and Ann Logsdon, in Barren County, February 8, 1803. The marriage was performed by John Howe, a fundamentalist protestant minister. He would have been born circa 1776, probably in Pennsylvania, and probably died in Edmonson County, Kentucky in 1829.

We do ~~not~~ have proof positive concerning the children of Valentine and Annie, but believe the children as named herein are correct. Some of these are mentioned by William Jesse Durbin, and the occurrence of the name "Valentine" among the grandchildren tends to point to Valentine as the father of the following children. Some of these named also appeared on the tax lists with Valentine, and other Simons, in Kentucky.

If Valentine died in Kentucky in 1829 (there is no will in Brownsville), there is no record of settlement of his estate. It was the custom in those days that when a father died leaving no will, the eldest son acquired everything, and the younger children got nothing. That would help explain why Silas Zachariah, believed to be the oldest son, born circa 1804 in what is now Hart County, stayed in Kentucky while the other children migrated to Illinois.

Annie was living with a married daughter in Richland County, Illinois in 1850, and in 1853 she sold a piece of property which her son John had bought in 1844 while he was living in Clay County, Illinois. She also bought two town lots in Olney, Illinois in 1853, but there are no deeds where she sold them.

### **History of Mammoth Cave**

The earliest known record pertaining to the Mammoth Cave is a land warrant issued to Valentine Simons, dated September 14, 1798. A survey was recorded for 200 acres of land, in Warren County, which included two saltpeter caves. Valentine was not issued the deed for the property until January 31, 1812, when he made the final payment of \$70.93, principal and interest. A series of legislative acts "for the relief of settlers South of Green River" permitted the original price of \$80.00 to be paid over a number of years.

In 1797 it was reported that vast amounts of nitre (saltpeter) was found in caves on the banks of Green River, and many of the settlers were making their own gunpowder. It is known that two of Valentine's future brothers-in-law were taking saltpeter from the caves, and possibly this is the reason Valentine sought this particular section of land.

In Warren County Survey Book, dated August 18, 1799, Valentine entered his claim. Shortly after that date, Valentine sold the property, by contract since he did not have a deed, to John Flatt. The larger of the caves then became Flatt's Cave. Prior to 1808, Flatt sold, again by contract, the property to George, Leonard and John McLean, and they divided the property into two tracts. There was 44 acres with the smaller of the caves, Dixon Cave, and 156 acres with Flatt's Cave.

The McLeans sold the 44 acres to Charles S. Morton on January 22, 1808 for \$600.00, and prior to 1810 sold the 156 acres to Fleming Gatewood and Charles Wilkins for \$3,000.00.

Archibald Miller, an Irishman, came to the cave area to set up operation for making saltpeter.

The deed which Valentine and Annie gave to John Flatt in 1812 indicates John paid them \$116.67 for the property. More than likely, that was the balance owed. There is a story in the family that Valentine also received a mule or a team of mules.

Information herein contained is from my own research and from the Fall 1986 issue of **TRACES**, publication of the South Central Kentucky Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc., of Glasgow, Kentucky.

After Valentine paid the balance he owed for the 200 acre property, and after the State had given him his deed, he and John Flatt met in their lawyer's offices in Hardin County and made out their deeds. These were then recorded in Warren County. Hyman Gratz, already dealing in saltpeter, paid Gatewood \$10,000 for his interest in the company in 1813, and later Charles Morton sold Gratz his interest for \$400.00. Under Gratz and Wilkins, the Mammoth Cave became an unlimited supply of saltpeter. When the War of 1812 came along, saltpeter was selling for 17¢ per pound, but when the British blockaded our ports, the price went to \$1.00 per pound. The owners of the Cave became wealthy men. Archibald Miller, who had devised the method for extracting the saltpeter in vast amounts, also became wealthy, and owned several thousand acres of land in Edmonson County. Without the saltpeter from the Mammoth Cave, the United States could have lost the War of 1812.

Hyman Gratz was a business associate of Joseph Simons, merchant, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The relationship of Joseph to the Kentucky Simons family has not been determined.

Bernard Gratz came to America from Langersdorf, Germany in 1754. Michael Gratz came to America in 1758. Bernard and Michael were brothers, and they ran one of the most successful mercantile businesses in Philadelphia. They, along with others, acquired many military land warrants from the veterans of the Revolutionary War totaling some 148,820 acres. While most of the land was in West Virginia, much of it was in Kentucky. Some of the land warrants were from veterans of the French and Indian Wars. Since Hyman was from Philadelphia, most probably he was a relative of either Bernard or Michael.

Doctor John Croghan, son of William Croghan and Lucy Clark, sister of General George Rogers Clark, acquired the Mammoth Cave on October 8, 1839. John, who was reared at Locust Grove in Louisville, was a medical doctor, and had planned on using the Cave for the treatment of T.B. His experiments

failed, so he gradually turned the Cave into a tourist attraction. He had plans to build a hotel some five miles from the entrance, with the guests arriving by stage coach. John Croghan's use and advertisement for the Cave is one reason for the popularity of the Cave to this day.

William, son of Archibald Miller, worked for Doctor Croghan, and did much of the original exploration of the Cave. It was the negro slave Stephan Bishop who made the deepest exploration, and for his efforts he was granted his freedom. When Doctor Croghan died, having never been married, he left the Cave to his nieces and nephews. The last heir died in the 1920's.



KENTUCKY LAND GRANTS SOUTH OF GREEN RIVER, BOOK 11, PAGE 47.

Charles Scott Esq.  
Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greetings. Know ye that by virtue and in consideration of a certificate #2428 the State Fine paid with a deduction of interest granted by the commissioner in 1798 agreeably to and act of assembly for encouraging and granting relief to settlers there is granted by said commonwealth unto Valentine Simons, a certain tract or parcel of land containing 200 acres by survey bearing date 3rd day of September, 1799 lying and being in the County of Warren and Green River and bounded as followeth to wit: Beginning at a sycamore on the bank of the river running South forty five, East one hundred and eighty poles to a hickory, thence South forty, west one hundred and ninety eight poles to a stake. North forty five, West seventy eight poles to a stake on the river, thence up the river North one hundred and fifty poles, thence North twenty East fifty two poles, thence North forty eight, East sixty poles to the beginning.

Including two salt petre caves with its appurtenances to have and to hold the said tract or parcel of land with its appurtenances to the said Valentine Simons and his heirs forever. In witness where of the said Charles Scott Esq., Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky hath hereunto set his hand and caused the seal of the said commonwealth to be affixed at Frankfort on the 31st day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand, eight hundred and twelve and of the commonwealth, the twentieth.

By the Governor Charles Scott  
J. Bledsoe, Secretary

Survey Book "A" page 330

State of Kentucky, Warren County

Surveyed for Valentine Simmons, 200 acres of second rate land, by virtue of the Commissioners Certificate #2428 on Green River. Beginning at a Sycamore on the Bank of the River running S 45 E 180 poles to a Hickory, thence S 40 W 198 poles to a stake, N 45, W 78 poles to a stake on the River, thence up the River N 150 poles, thence N 20 E 52 poles, thence N 48, E 60 poles to the beginning. Including two "Salt Petre" Caves.

Surveyed September the 3rd, 1799

Samuel Goode Ds  
E.M. Covington SWC

John Simmons  
CC  
Peter Simmons

This deed of bargain and sale, made and entered into this 9th day of July, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twelve, between Valentine Simons and Ann his wife, of the County of Hardin and the State of Kentucky of the one part, and John Flat of the County of Barren and State aforesaid of the other part, witnessith that the said Valentine Simons and Ann his wife, have for and in consideration of the sum of one hundred and sixteen dollars & sixty seven cents, money of the United States of America to them in hand, paid by the aforesaid John Flat, as and by me sealing and delivering of these presents, whereby they do acknowledged, have granted, bargained and sold, aliened and confirmed, and by these presents do grant, bargain, and sell, alien and confirm unto the aforesaid John Flat, his heirs and assigns, all that track of parcel of land situated, lying and being in the County of Warren on Green River and bounded as followith:

Beginning at a sycamore tree on the bank of the river, running South forty five East one hundred eighty poles to a hickory, thence South forty West one hundred ninety eight poles to a stake thence North forty five West seventy eight poles to a stake on the river, thence up the river North one hundred fifty poles, thence North twenty East fifty two poles, thence North twenty East fifty two poles, thence North forty eight East sixty poles to the beginning, containing 200 acres including two salt petre caves, the one called Dixon's, and the other the Mamouth cave, to have and to hold the aforesaid tract or parcel of land with all and singular the appertenances there unto belonging or in any way (can't read one word) thereto appertaining to the aforesaid John Flat, his heirs, and assigns forever. To his and their only proper use and behoof. And the said Valentine Simons and Ann his wife for themselves, their heirs, executors, and administrators, do hereby covenant and warrant and agree to, and with the said John Flat, his heirs and assigns, (can't read five words) the said Valentine Simons and Ann his wife, will forever warrant and defend the right and title of the said tract or parcel of land, and appurtenances unto the said John Flat, his heirs and assigns against the (can't read two words) molestation and interference of all and every person or persons whatever. In testamony whereof the aforesaid Valentine Simons and Ann his wife, hereunto set their hands and affixed their seals, the day and year first above written.

Signed Sealed, Acknowledged  
and Delivered in the presence of

*OB Gatwood*  
*Aslett H Buckner*  
*Ann Kesinger*  
*Hardin County*  
*State of Kentucky* } Set

*Valentine Simons Seal*  
*Ann his wife*  
*mark*

This day the within named Ann Simons was examined by us the subscribers, two of the Commonwealth's Justices of the Peace, in and for the aforesaid County, privately, separately, and apart from her husband, and she did acknowledge the within deed of conveyance to John Flat to be her act and deed, and she did freely, willingly and voluntarily relinquish her right of dower in and to the land, premises, and appurtenances, by the within deed, conveyed without the threats, persuasions, or coersuastions of the aforesaid husband, and willingly the same should be admitted to record.

Given under our hands and seals this 9th day of July 1812.

*Lewis Wells Esq Seal*  
*Wm Kessinger Esq Seal*

STATE OF KENTUCKY  
WARREN COUNTY SCT.

I Jonathan Hobson, Clerk of the County Court for forsaid County, do certify that the foregoing indenture was this day proven before me by the oath of Joseph B. Gatewood and Aylett H. Buckner, to be the act and deed of the within named Valentine Simons and that I have recorded the aforesaid indenture and the certificate of Wm. Kessinger and Lewis Wells Esqs. together with the certificate as required by law.

In testamony whereof I have unto set my hand this 11th day of July 1812.

*Jonathan Hobson*

This deed of bargain and sale, made and entered into this 9th day of July in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twelve, between John Flatt of the one part, and George McLean, Leonard McLean, and John McLean of the other part, witnesseth that the said John Flat and Patience his wife, for and in consideration of the sum of four hundred dollars, money of the United States of America, to them in hand paid by the said George, Leonard, and John, on and before the sealing and delivering of these presents, have granted, bargained and sold, alined and confirmed, and by these presents do bargain, sell, and aline and confirm unto the said George McLean, Leonard McLean, and John McLean, their heirs and assigns, all that tract or parcel of land situated, lying, and being in the County of Warren on Green River and bounded as follows; Beginning at a sycamore on the bank of the River running South forty five, East one hundred and eighty poles to a hickory, thence South forty, West one hundred and ninety eight poles to a stake, thence North forty five, West seventy eight poles to a stake on the River, thence up the River North one hundred fifty poles North twenty, East fifty two poles, thence North forty eight, East sixty poles to the beginning, containing two hundred acres including two salt petre caves, the one called Dixon's, the other the Mammoth Cave, to have and to hold the said tract or parcel of land with all and singular the appertenances there unto belonging or in any ways there to appertaining to the said George McLean, Leonard McLean, and John McLean, their heirs and assigns forever to them and their only proper use and behoof, and the said John Flat and Patience his wife for themselves, their heirs, executors and administrators do hereby covenant and agree to and with the said George McLean, Leonard McLean, and John McLean, theirs and assigns that they, the said John Flat and Patience his wife, will for ever warrent and defend the right and title of the said tract of land and its appertenances unto the said George McLean, Leonard McLean, and John McLean, their heirs and assigns against the claim, demand, molestation, and interference of all and every person or persons whatsoever. In testimony thereof the said John Flat and Patience his wife have here unto set their hands and seals the day and year first written above.

Signed Sealed Acknowledged  
and Delivered in presence of us

*J. H. Steword*  
*Bylaw W. Beckman*  
*Mr. Klinger*

*John Flatt Seal*  
mark  
*Patience Flatt Seal*  
mark

Received from George McClain, Leonard McClain, and John McClain the sum of four hundred dollars, being the full amount of the consideration money for the within mentioned tract of land and its appertenances. Witness my hand this 9th day of July, 1812.

*John H. Platt*  
*Mark*

*The presence of*  
*P. J. Gatewood*  
*W. B. Beckman*

Signed Sealed Acknowledged  
 and Delivered in presence of us



John Flatt, according to his affidavit when he applied for a pension for services rendered during the Revolutionary War in 1839, was born on the banks of the Delaware River in Hampton, Pennsylvania circa 1759.

John was asked the following questions:

"Where were you living when you were called into service?"

"Where have you lived since the Revolutionary War?"

"Where do you live now?"

John's reply:

"When I was called into service, I was living with my father in Pennsylvania on Will's Creek, several miles back of Hagerstown. In three or four years after the War, I moved with my father and family into Kentucky. I resided there until about eight years since, when I moved to Illinois where I now reside. I have resided in Greene County for five and one half years."

Will's Creek is located in Bedford County, Pennsylvania, and Edward Logsdon #1 also lived in Bedford County. The second Edward Logsdon was probably born in Bedford County, but he moved to Washington County, Pennsylvania with his wife, Polly Brown, and family. It is believed this second Edward Logsdon was the Edward Logsdon who served with John Simons and others in the Company of Captain Edmund Baxter. John Flatt was on the tax list of Madison County with Joseph Logsdon, Thomas Logsdon and Edward Logsdon in 1790 and 1792. He and Thomas Logsdon were on the tax lists of Barren County for a number of years, and was on the census of Hart County in 1820. Hart County was formed from Hardin County and Barren County in 1819, so John Flatt and Thomas Logsdon probably moved to present Hart County when they left Madison County.

John Flatt was married to Patience Logsdon, parentage unknown, perhaps in Madison County. Patience was listed as over 45 years old in 1810, so she would have been born circa 1765. Patience died in Barren County on September 15, 1815. John Flatt died in Bluffdale Township, Greene County, Illinois on April 6, 1841.

(Information on the John Flatt Family comes from George B. King, 8 Ouatoga Bluff, Godfrey, Illinois 62035.)

**Children of John Flatt and Patience Logsdon**

1. James, born circa 1789 in Madison County, Kentucky, was married to Margaret West, September 17, 1807. He died in Gasconade County, Illinois on October 2, 1826.
2. Edward, born circa 1791 in Barren County, Kentucky, was married to Rosetta Garrison, June 19, 1810. He died in Greene County, Illinois on December 6, 1876.
3. Mary, born circa 1792, was married to Charles Trotter on May 12, 1812.
4. Aaron, born circa 1794, was married to Eunice Kelley, in Hamilton County, Illinois in February, 1824. Aaron died before 1840.

Eunice Kelley Flatt was married second as second wife of Edward Simons, in Greene County, Illinois in 1840. (See the census of Calhoun County, Illinois, 1850, in the section on Edward Simons, preceding.)

5. Sarah, born circa 1796, was married to Lloyd Portwood on June 9, 1814.
6. John, born circa 1798, was married to Mary Swan on May 1, 1815.
7. Honor, born circa 1802, was married to James Phillips in 1819.

Mrs. M.C. Wright, 8604 Smithton Road, Louisville, Kentucky 40219, great-great-great-granddaughter of James Sturgeon, who bought land from Edward Flatt, son of John Flatt and Patience Logsdon, September 19, 1818, and from "F." Valentine Simons and Ann Simons on December 23, 1811, states that John Flatt was born in New Jersey near the Delaware River. She listed eight children of John Flatt, adding a William, born circa 1788. She listed, in birth order: Edward, William, James, Aaron, Mary, John, Sarah, then Honor.

**Tax list for Warren County:**

1797, John Simons  
Edward Simons  
Vallentine Simons

1798, there were no tax lists.

1799, Peter Simons, 200 acres of land.  
John Simon, 200 acres of land on Green River.  
Vallentine Simon, 200 acres of land on Green River.

1800, John Simons, 123 acres of land on Green River.  
Valentine Simons, 200 acres of land on Green River.  
Edward Simons, 200 acres of land on Green River.

Tax list for Barren County:

- 1801, John Simons, 150 acres on Green River.  
Edward Simons  
Valint. Simons
- 1802, John Simmonds, 200 acres on Green River.  
Valentine Simmonds
- 1803, Edward Simons, 100 acres of land.  
John Simons, 200 acres on Green River.
- 1804, John Simons Sen.  
Peter Simons  
John Simons Jr., 200 acres on Green River.
- 1805, John Simons, 230 acres on Green River.  
John Simons Jr.
- 1808, Edward Simons, 200 acres on Green River.
- 1809, Edward Simons

Tax list of Hardin County:

- 1805, Phelty Simons, no land.  
Simeon Simons, no land.

(This is the first and only time Simeon Simons appeared on the tax list in Kentucky. I assume Simeon was a son of John Senior, but don't know for sure. He could be a cousin, for Valentine did name a son Simeon.)

- 1806, John Simons Jr., no land.  
Edward Simons, no land.  
John Simons Sr., no land.
- 1811, John Simons, no land.  
Valentine Simons, no land.



In Barren County Deed Book "B", page 431:

This indenture made the 23rd day of December in the year 1811, between Valentine Simons and Anney his wife, both of Hardin County, and James Sturgeon of the County of Barren, in consideration of \$20.00 current money, hath bargained, granted, and sold to James Sturgeon, one parcel of land lying, situated, and being in the County of Barren. Beginning in a large valley about one mile from Green River, consisting of 100 acres by survey, . . . .

his  
Valentine X Simons  
mark

her  
Anney X Simons  
mark

Wit.

his  
Joseph X Lord  
mark

his  
William X Cann  
mark

Joshua Crump

W. Logan, Clk.

I have made many trips to Barren County trying to find how Valentine acquired this 100 acres. There are no deeds in the courthouse with his name, either buying or selling property, except this one. The only thing I can think of that could explain Valentine's possession of the land is that it was a part of the 200 acres that John Simons, Sr. owned. Although John Senior's estate was not settled until after 1813, he could have died in 1811, and Valentine, being his son, could have sold it in the name of the heirs.

1812, John Simon, no land.  
Joseph Simmons, no land.  
John Simmons, no land.  
Valentine Simmons, no land.

1813, Valentine Simmons, no land.  
John Simmons, no land.

1814, Valentine Simmons, no land.  
John Simmons, no land.  
Joseph Simmons, no land.

Tax list of Grayson County:

1811, David Simons, no land.  
1812, David Simons, no land.  
1813, David Simons, no land.  
1814, Valentine Simons, Green River.  
William Simons, no land.  
1815, Valentine Simons, Little Clifty.  
1816, Valentine Simons, Bear Creek.

Tax list of Hardin County:

1817, Valentine Simons, no land.  
John Simons, no land.  
Joseph Simons, no land.  
Samuel Simons, no land.  
1818, nothing.  
1819 Valentine Simons, 100 acres on Sandy Creek.  
David Simons, two town lots.  
John Simons, 100 and 200 acres on Nolyn River.  
Samuel Simons, no land.  
Joseph Simons, no land.  
Robert Simons, no land.  
1820, Edward Simons, no land.  
Valentine Simons, 100 acres on Sandy Creek.  
John Simons, 300 acres on Sandy Creek.  
John Simons, no land.  
1821, David Simon, no land.  
Edward Simon, no land.  
Valentine Simon, no land.  
John Simon, 100 acres.

- 1822, John Simon, 200 acres on Sandy Creek, school Dist. #11. Two children over 14, four under 14.  
David Simon, no land.  
Valentine Simon, school Dist. #11. Four children over 14, six children under 14.  
John Simon, no land.

(This is the only place where we have found the number of children listed in the families. John, having been married in 1792, would have children already married in 1822.)

Tax list of Grayson County:

- 1823, Andrew Simon, North Fork of Caney Creek.  
Edward Simon, Green River.  
Felts Simon, North Fork of Caney Creek.
- 1824, Andrew Simon, no land.  
Valentine Simon, 233 acres on Sandy Creek.
- 1825, David Simons, no land.  
John Simons, no land.

Tax list of Hardin County:

- 1826, David Simmon, no land.  
John Simmon, 233 acres on Sandy Creek.  
Valentine Simmon, 350 acres in Edmonson County.  
Silas Simmon, no land.  
John L. (or S.) Simmon, no land.

(This was the first year that Silas appeared. He would have been 21 years old in 1826, having been born in 1804/1805. This is the first year we found an initial after the first name, but we don't know who this John was. I am sure the people in that day had two Christian names, just as we do today. That could help explain why I have found so many Simon/Simons. The tax collector used one name one year, and the second name the next year. Samuel, Joseph and Robert could be sons of John Simons, Jr., and John L. (or S.) could be a son of John Junior or Valentine.)

Tax list of Edmonson County:

- 1827, John Simons, 50 acres on Bear Creek.  
Valentine Simons, 50 acres on Bear Creek.

Tax list of Hardin County:

1827, Joseph Simons, no land  
Silas Simons, no land  
John Simons, 233 acres on Sandy Creek

Tax list of Edmonson County:

1828, Silas Simons, Nolin River.  
Valentine Simons, Nolin River.  
John Simons, Nolin River.

(This must be Valentine and his two eldest sons.)

1829, Silas Simons, 50 acres on Green River.  
Simeon Simons, 50 acres on Green River.  
Valentine Simons, four children over 15, two children under 15.

(This is the first year Simeon appeared. Born in 1808, he would have been 21 in 1829. If Silas, John, Simeon and a daughter, all over 21 years old, are added to the six children listed in the household of Valentine in 1829, there would have been ten children, as there was in 1822.)

1830, Silas Simons, 50 acres on Green River.  
John Simons, 50 acres on Green River.