

THE SMITH SCHOLARSHIP: ONE OF A KIND

At Community Congregational Church, it's Frank E. and Salome B. Smith's names that grace the scholarship fund established by Mrs. Salome Smith in 1976. And for the very reason that there are "so many" Smiths, she preferred the scholarship to be designated "The Frank E. and Salome B. Smith Scholarship Fund," not just the Smith Scholarship Fund. Since its establishment, the fund has awarded scholarships to over 100 recipients.

Frank's and Salome's story begins back in 1919 when Frank, originally from a farm in Rocky Ford and fresh from military service, came to Manitou Springs and opened a restaurant on July 4. That same year for a high school graduation gift, Salome Frieden came with her family from Kiowa, Kansas for the summer, where she proceeded to apply for a job in Smith's Service Restaurant. Before the summer was over she and "Mr. Smith" were engaged, but not wanting to rush into anything, Salome returned to Kansas for another year. They were married August 16, 1920, and continued to operate the restaurant for over 30 more years. At one time it was the second largest restaurant in the Pikes Peak region, seating 250 diners.

Their only child, Evelyn Mae, was born in 1921 and is on the Cradle Roll of Community Congregational Church where she was christened in 1922. The family also joined the church at this time. During a scarlet fever epidemic, Evelyn became ill and never completely recovered. As a result, she died when only five years old. She was a lovely little girl with "big happy eyes," her mother tells, and of course the "apple of her father's eye."

Frank really enjoyed building more than restauranting or farming, and was responsible for many area buildings. Tubby's Turnaround was originally a Standard Oil station that he built, and across the avenue from Soda Springs Park is a large apartment complex that Salome remembered had 68 steps from Manitou Avenue up to Waltham. She chuckled as she recalled its ingenious retaining wall, which in order to build, he collected iron bed frames for supports. It then became a favorite spot for tourists to take pictures while under construction. Manitou's first shopping center was built by Frank at Becker's Lane and Manitou Avenue. For a few years they lived behind the center in a log cabin he had built on Fountain Creek, where Salome had a pet trout that would come to be hand fed. He built barracks at Camp Carson and also the house where Salome lived just north of Colorado Springs Memorial Park. In 1951 it was one of the first in that area (on the edge of Colorado Springs) and had a fantastic view, since there were no trees.

In Manitou Frank helped complete the former American Legion building on Washington Avenue. After so many years of shoveling coal for the restaurant ovens, Frank was instrumental in bringing natural gas to Manitou Springs. He was very generous to his community and was especially interested in teenagers, which encouraged Salome to set up the Frank E. and Salome B. Smith Scholarship Fund at Community Congregational Church in Manitou Springs, the only known scholarship of its kind.

The restaurant was a summer operation, so they spent winters in Arizona, and lots of time hunting and fishing around Gunnison, Colorado. Frank loved fishing, hunting and horseshoes, and Salome was right there with him. He enjoyed traveling in the United States and especially liked Hawaii. After Frank's death in 1958, Salome continued to travel, and had been around the world twice, visited Europe, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, South America, the Orient, was very partial to Norway, and remembered with great fondness a trip on a freighter. Other unusual modes of travel were on a camel, an elephant, and a railroad handcar, on which she and Frank would hitch a ride after a walk in the mountains around Gunnison.

Salome enjoyed flower gardening and needlework, and collected many things, such as dolls and spoons, which have now been donated to the Manitou Springs Library and Miramont Castle, respectively, for others to enjoy.

Salome passed away on January 3, 1994 at the age of 95. Her will included gifts to various members of her extended family and friends. The bulk of her estate, however, was divided into to several large charitable distributions to various charities in the Pikes Peak region. One of the distributions established the Frank E. and Salome B. Smith Scholarship Fund. The annual income from this scholarship fund is distributed to Community Congregational Church to be distributed to young people to continue their education. The scholarships are administered by the Community Congregational Church Scholarship Board.

Linda Baker and Arlene Penman visited with Salome Smith and gathered the information used in this article. It was published in the Pikes Peak Journal in about 1989 or 1990.