
Her
Picture

Mr. Editor

I send you herewith a little sketch reviewing the life of my mother and of her family connections, going back to the early settlement of our part of good old Clermont County which has been brought down through four generations. It may be of interest to many of those who read your esteemable paper. Yours very truly, W. C. Salt

my grandfather

Ruth Salt, daughter of William and Margaret Ross, was born August 11, 1816 near Fredericktown, Washington County, Pennsylvania, and died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. F. M. Ellis, at Wiggonsville, Ohio, July 18, 1912, age 95 years, 11 months, 7 days.

So reads the obituary of one of the oldest residents of Tate Township whose body was so recently laid to rest in the Bethel Cemetary.

We can scarcely realize the time covered by her life and if we go back to her father's time, we are at the beginning of the history of the United States.

About one hundred and forty years ago a little caravan of pack horses and foot travelers took its departure from the vicinity of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, bound for the frontier. Climbing the foot hills and then the steepes of the Allegheny Mountains the company of emigrants finally reached the western slopes and halted at Laurel Hill in western Pennsylvania.

In the company of the pioneers was little William Ross, snugly tucked away each day of the journey in a pannier on a pack horse. His parents and friends built homes in what was then a wilderness in Washington County. The little villages of Fredericktown and Brownsville grew up, and as they grew, little Willie grew to manhood. The pioneers needed artisans and William learned the trade of a gunsmith, not only mending but making the rifles to be used in the pursuit of the wild turkey, the deer, bear and other game and in protection against the wild Indians.

Needing a helpmate, William wooed and won fair Margaret Milligan and settled down working at his trade, farming some and mining coal for home consumption, the coal veins here being near the surface of the ground. Coal at the mouth of the mine sold for one cent per bushel. The grubbing hoe, shovel and wheelbarrow, all handmade, were the only implements used.

In 1705 thar first son, Andrew, was born and as the years passed other sons and daughters came until they were surrounded by a large family, Ruth -- above mentioned being the youngest. William's brother, Elijah, took a western fever and moved to Ohio, locating at Franklin and afterward moved to Zanesville where his descendents still live.

Elijah wrote to William of the beauties of the Ohio country and urged him to come west which he finally concluded to do. Gathering up a goodly party of friends, they rigged up a flat boat, stowing away provisions, household goods and stock, they committed themselves to the current of the beautiful Ohio River for a somewhat perilous journey and after a five hundred mile ride landed at New Richmond in the summer of 1818. He still found it profitable to continue his trade as gunsmith for there was plenty of game in the forests, though the Indians were all gone, none being found in this part of the state after 1811. His sons, Andrew, James and William each learned a trade. He found a farm for sale on Ulery's Run, near what is now called Hurlington, and purchased it. He moved out on this farm, but in a few years a prior claimant appeared and Mr. Ross found that his title was not sufficient to hold it and he gave it up and moved back to New Richmond where he and his wife died.

His son Alexander moved to Iowa. William settled down in New Richmond and was for many years a steamboat engineer. James married Ann Simpson and came to Bethel where he died with cholera in 1848. Andrew never married and later made his home with his sister, Ruth. Harriet married William Roseberry and after his death married Robert Davis and lived at New Richmond. Ann married William B. Pease and lived at Amelia, and Margaret married R. W. Clarke and made a home for Ruth after her parents died, living in Shawneetown, Illinois, and Batavia, Ohio.

In 1836 Ruth was married to George W. Salt, son of Edward and Priscilla (Conrey) Salt. They began their married life in a log cabin on what is now known as the Hibbett farm, just where the government built the observation tower a few years ago, and what is very remarkable, the logs from the house are still in use on the McQuitty farm near Saltair.

The farm contained 375 acres, a considerable portion of it being woodland, having several cabins on it around which was a tract of cleared land. They lived in three of these cabins and in 1842 built the brick house now standing on the farm. They planted fruit trees and some evergreen trees which grew up and the residence received the name of "Cedar Home". Here they raised several children, all of whom married and have raised families. The children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, now living number forty-one.

The farm work was very hard; the housework required was very irksome. This young housewife did her baking in the covered skillet and the Dutch bake oven on the hearth and the dinner pot hung from the crane in the great fireplace even after the new house was built. The first cookstove was what they called a step stove, one set of holes being higher than the other with the oven back so that the fire could pass over and under it.

Log rollings were frequent with as many as fifty hands and when harvest time came, it was very common to have fifty men to cook for, three meals a day. The wheat was cut with a crooked sickle and threshed with a flail or tramped out with horses. When the harvest was over, the wool clipped from the sheep was washed, dyed and sent to the carding machine to be made into rolls. Then came the spinning. Day after day she twirled the old spinning wheel, pacing back and forth, lengthening out the thread to be woven into blankets, jeans or linsey cloth to clothe the children or to be knitted into socks and stockings to wear in winter. She had no sewing machine to stitch the long seams, all work being done by hand, but when winter came everything was ready even to double knit mittens.