

PORTAGE COUNTY OHIO - HISTORY: KENT 1805 - 1850

In 1999 Ms. Betty Ralph transcribed numerous articles on and about Cuyahoga and Portage counties, OH, from "Memorial to the Pioneer Women of the Western Reserve." These articles were originally published under the auspices of the Woman's Department of the Cleveland Centennial Commission in 1896, edited by Mrs. Gertrude Van Rensselaer Wickham. The articles contain many details about the lives of the early settlers.

What is most interesting and worth noting is that these brief bios contain information on and about the early pioneer women of this region.

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The village of Kent, formerly Franklin Mills, in the township of Franklin, is situated about thirty-two miles southeast of Cleveland. It has a fine, natural location, lying as it does on both sides of the river, the land sloping back from its banks in gentle undulations, making a pleasing variation of scenery. It is encircled in all directions and at no great distance from it by beautiful little lakes, which make it a desirable spot in summer.

Within easy access are four railroads, The "Erie," "Cleveland, Canton & Southern," the "Pittsburg & Western," and a mile and a half away, the "Cleveland & Pittsburg." We find in the history of Portage County that Franklin was the first civil organization effected after the admission of Ohio as a state in 1802, it being formed in the same year.

The present territory of Franklin containing 16,000 acres, was purchased in 1798 by Aaron OLMSTEAD of Hartford, Conn. For 12 ½ cents per acre. During the first era in the history of the town there were two villages known first and upper and lower, afterward as Carthage (the upper) and Franklin Mills (the lower). Later in 1863, the duplex names were changed in honor of Marvin KENT, to the name of Kent for both.

In 1805, about November 1st, John HAYMAKER with his wife (Sally LEGGETT) came with their family from Pittsburg and took up their abode in this, at that time, wilderness. Of Mrs. HAYMAKER's early history we do not gain any unusual incidents, except those which inevitably came with the hardships and privations of early pioneer life. She lived to the advanced age of ninety-four, after having been a resident of the place sixty-four years. Her daughter Emily had the honor of being the first female white child born in the township, and has passed her whole life here, and now at the age of eighty-seven, having never married,

occupies a home with her brother John, two years her senior, he having been the very first white child born in the township. She remembers when the Indians were almost their only neighbors, when panthers, wolves and catamounts were more friendly than was agreeable, often making raids on the sheep and poultry. There were other branches of the HAYMAKER family represented in the township in its earliest days; of the wives and daughters we can learn but little, but as a family they have been ever known to be honest, upright and hardy, and these traits we know are as surely handed down from the mother as the father.

In the year 1814 we find recorded the first marriage in the township, the parties being Christian CACKLER and Theresa NIGHMAN. As this was nearly ten years after the first tree had been hewn, it must have been a great event in the settlement. To be the first bride, she must have felt to be quite an honor. She was a woman of strong and energetic character and lived to rear a large family of sons and daughters, several of whom are still living in or near the township.

In 1818 Joshua WOODARD with his wife (Rebecca WORDON) moved into this township from Ravenna. They lived for many years in the hostelry on the west side of the river known as Woodard's Tavern. It was a popular place, and a most convenient one for the traveler of those days, and as Mr. WOODARD was engaged in other enterprises, the success of the public house depended largely upon the wife and daughters, and the thrift and energy of these women made it both pleasant and profitable. It is said of her that she once made the journey to New York, her native state, on horseback, carrying a babe in her arms all the way.

Mary, (Mrs. Calvin WILLIAMS) her oldest daughter soon after marriage became a pioneer in the state of Illinois, making herself very useful in this home as a friend, nurse, and even physician when occasion demanded. She is still living in that state at the age of eighty-nine.

Lucretia WOODARD (Mrs. Geo. HOPKINS) removed years ago to Dayton, O., where she died at the age of eighty-four.

Lucy WOODARD (Mrs. Yale RUSSELL) lived in Franklin township all her life, except a few months prior to her death, which she passed with her daughter, Mrs. Lemuel REED in Jamestown, N.Y. She was a woman whose home and family were her world. The new woman had no place in her philosophy. She was capable and efficient in her sphere to the last.

Abigail WOODARD (Mrs. David LONGCOY) has lived most of her life in or near Kent. She has been the mother of nine children, some living, some dead. She has been ever a faithful, devoted mother, often taking a child through a severe illness without a physician. A few years ago she was stricken with a slow paralysis, which has rendered her nearly helpless, but which she has borne with characteristic calmness and patience. Her home is now with her son in Kent, where she is ministered unto by her daughter Miraette.

In the year 1816 there came from that historic spot, "Braddock's field," near Pittsburg, William STEWART and his wife, Susan FERGUSON. The way was toilsome, the hardships, many, and the naturally delicate woman, unable to bear the heat and burden of the day, gradually succumbed to ill health.

Of her family, Mary STEWART married Charles FURBER, and died in Michigan some years since. Elizabeth married Andrew PATTERSON and lives in Piqua, O. Maria was married in 1840 to Marvin KENT, and has spent her whole life in this place. She is a most estimable woman, a faithful wife, a loving mother, a true friend. There were two other daughters in the STEWART family, Ann Eliza, Mrs. William HILLIARD of Columbus, O., and Henrietta, Mrs. Frank RUNNILL.

In 1817 the people of the township erected a building to be use, regardless of sect or creed, for church and school purposes. Of the early lady teachers we find record of a Miss Orpah CURTISS and also a Miss THAYER.

In 1825 the Rev. George SHELDON with his mother and his wife, Harmony Ann FOBES, came to the place, he to assume the pastorate of the then growing church, she (his wife) to open a school for young ladies in their home, a handsome, new house on the west side of the river, still standing, and now known as the "Parmalee homestead."

Mrs. SHELDON taught the common English branches, such as in those days were considered sufficient for the grasp of the feminine mind, also embroidery and other fine needle work. This school must have had quite a local reputation, as we know that a number of girls from adjoining towns were under her instruction. One of them, Mrs. Henry SAWYER (Susan HALL) still lives to relate her experiences under the tutelage of Mrs. SHELDON. Mrs. SAWYER is the mother of Dr. P.H. SAWYER, and grandmother of Dr. John SAWYER of Western Reserve University.

Following Mr. SHELDON came the Rev. Stephen Wakeman BURRITT, who having

been married to his wife, Sally A. MYER in Litchfield, Conn. by Dr. Lyman BEECHER, father of the famous BEECHER family, came to Ohio, first to Austinburg, and afterward to Kent. Of Mrs. BURRITT we learn that she was one of those meek and quiet spirits whose worth was best known to her family and intimate friends. Of her daughters, Sara (Mrs. COE) resides in Cleveland; Mary, (Mrs. Charles H. KENT), a woman of excellent traits and much native refinement, has lived since 1846 in Kent.

In the early years, about 1819, came from Granville, Mass. Chauncey NEWBERRY and wife, Fannie COE. Mrs. NEWBERRY is said to have been a remarkable woman. She was a sister of the Rev. Harvey COE, who was identified with the early history of Western Reserve College. Her son Oliver still lives a highly respected citizen of Kent, and her daughters, Mary and Laura NEWBERRY, two most estimable women have lived for many years in Akron, O.

Mrs. James CUTHBERT (Ann Craig GRAHAM), originally from Scotland, later from New York, came here from Copley, Summit County in 1835. Having heard of the introduction of the silk worm culture, they came through an almost unbroken forest, living first in what is now known as the Dyson house. She was a devoted member of the Presbyterian church then located on Crane ave. She died in 1850 leaving a husband and eight children to mourn her loss. Three of her children, J.A. CUTHBERT, Harriet, (Mrs. H. NEWNHAM) and Sarah Mrs. G.W. ROUSE still reside in Kent.

Somewhere about 1817 Francis FURBER with his wife Elizabeth came from England. Mary FURBER married Geo. B. DePEYSTER, but did not continue to make Kent her home. Elizabeth FURBER married Joel DePEYSTER, spending all her life in Kent, the last years of which her home was with her daughter Frances (Mrs. Holmes ALLEN) of blessed memory. Her other children were Christina, wife of Joseph PERIRA, and Byron who spent his whole life here.

Mrs. Sylvester HUGGINS (Mary WILLIAMS) lived in Kent many years and died at a ripe old age at the home of her daughter Fidelia, Mrs. Henry LAKE. She was one who ever stretched out her hand to the needy, and whom many shall rise up and call her blessed.

In the early history of the Presbyterian church among its very earliest members were Deacon Samuel ANDREWS and Mrs. Samuel ANDREWS. Of Mrs. ANDREWS we could learn almost nothing except the notable fact that as early, probably as 1825, she sent a son as a missionary to the Sandwich Islands.

Mrs. David DAY (Mary FARNHAM) came to Franklin from Westfield, Mass. In 1827 with her husband and children. Her father, Jesse FARNHAM of Massachusetts being an extensive land owner in the vicinity, sent out Mr. and Mrs. DAY to look after his interests. She made the journey most of the way by wagon, carrying a babe in her arms.

Upon their arrival they found nothing in preparation for a home as they had expected, but with undaunted courage they set to work as best they could to carve out their fortunes in this new country. Mr. DAY was a minister of the Methodist church, and together they helped in the building up and maintaining of that society. She was the mother of eight children, and gave two sons to the ministry, Dr. Wm. F. DAY, highly honored by the M.E. church and father of Wilson M. DAY, director general of the Cleveland Centennial Commission, now a prominent citizen of Cleveland, and David Edward DAY, also of the Methodist denomination; two sons to the army, Capt. A.H and F.A. DAY; two most excellent daughters, Lucy, Mrs. Charles IREDELL (deceased), and Louisa, Mrs. S.P. STINAFF, who still resides near Kent. Later she married Mr. P.W. BARD of Utica, N.Y. to whom she bore a daughter, Ann, who was the possessor of a clear and vigorous intellect, a robust physique and a kindly though forcible nature. She died in Kent in 1884 at the age of eight- three.

Dr. David BIRGE and Celia PITKIN were married in East Hartford, Conn. And removed to Ohio about 1832, first to Freedom, later to Franklin. Mary their eldest daughter has lived her married life in Stow as wife and widow of Silas WETMORE; Julia the second daughter married a Mr. KELLOGG of Iowa and has been a widow some years. The third daughter, Esther, died early, soon after her marriage to Mr. FAIRCHILD of Oberlin. Her only son, Edgar FAIRCHILD, is a lawyer in St. Paul, Minn.

In 1836 the family of William KNOWLTON and Betsy ANDREWS removed from Brandon, Vt. To Franklin Mills, O. The oldest son, Wm. Taylor and wife, Rowena WHITCOMB, and his brother Ephriam and wife, Jane ALVORD, had preceded the father and mother by a year or more. The oldest daughter, Betsey (Mrs. Jonathan CARVER) with her husband and family came sometime later from Lyons, N.Y. The last named family lived here many years.

Mrs. CARVER was a woman of unusual qualities, both of mind and disposition. Having a keen intellect, she retained her hold upon the affairs of life and her interest in persons and places to an unusual degree to the end of her days. She

passed away at the home of her daughter, Mrs. T.E. METLIN in Cleveland a few years ago at the age of eighty-nine.

Another daughter of the KNOWLTONs, Adeline, (Mrs. Austin WILLIAMS) lived all her married life on a farm just out of town on the Hudson road. Her quiet, gentle, womanly ways and godly character marked her ever as a model for all who knew her. She died as she had lived, peacefully, in her home in 1880. Another daughter, Mary, Mrs. Homer HART, lived in Kent most of her life. She was a woman of sterling qualities. There were two other daughters, Mrs. Nancy CRANE, now living in Wisconsin, and Mrs. Sarah SPOONER, long since deceased, mother of Mrs. John A. SEYMOUR and Mrs. Seymour ADAMS of East Cleveland. There were also three other sons, who, with their wives lived and died here. Albert whose wife was Sarah WHITCOMB, noted as a most cleanly housewife and for purity of character as well; Alonzo whose wife, Eliza DePEYSTER, was for the most of the latter years of her life and invalid, yet whose benign influence was felt far outside the walk of her home, and John whose wife, Lois CRITTENDEN, lived in spite of a crippled limb an earnest, active, Christian life, and died in Kent many years ago.

Clarissa MOORE and Barber CLARK were married in Blanford, Mass., in 1812, came to Franklin soon after; moved by ox team; stopped right in the woods, cleared a spot large enough on which to build a log house. Mrs. CLARK used to help burn brush in the evening to keep the wild beasts from the home. She was the mother of eight children, all born at this home. Mr. CLARK was deacon of the congregational church for forty years. Both lived to a good old age and died where their married life had been spent, in the home of their adoption. Of their eight children two daughters are living, Mrs. Hannah ETON in Troy, O., and Mrs. Ruth CLEMENT in Indiana.

Clarissa Cheney PITKIN and Frederick WOODBRIDGE were married in Manchester, Conn. In 1822. They settled in Franklin Mills in 1838 and at once identified themselves with the congregational church. Mrs. WOODBRIDGE, although not in the strictest sense a pioneer, was obliged in coming west to give up much that was most dear and congenial to her, but she had the broad sympathy and kindness which made her beloved by everyone. The sick and needy never appealed to her in vain, and many a wanderer brought by the underground railway to her door was fed and comforted and sent on to Canada. Of her three children, F.W. WOODBRIDGE, living in Ravenna, was the husband of the lamented Mary A. WOODBRIDGE of W.C.T.U. fame. C.D. WOODBRIDGE is a banker in Cleveland. Elizabeth P., (Mrs. James W. CONE) the only daughter, has

been identified with the Congregational church fifty- eight years and is still living in Kent.

Among the more notable women who have resided in Kent are Mary A. DAY, second wife of John BROWN of Harper's Ferry fame, who lived here a few years with her husband and family. Lucy HENRY, wife of H.B. SPELLMAN from Westfield, Mass., whose daughter (Lucy Celestia) Mrs. John D. ROCKEFELLER was born and lived for a short time in this place, also Mrs. Jairus Cassius FAIRCHILD who came with her husband to Franklin in 1827. They built the first brick house in town, and in this house was born a son who afterward became governor of Wisconsin.

Julia CROSSETT and Eli NUTTING were married in Conway, Mass. In October, 1849 and came directly to Franklin. They could then travel by rail only as far as Buffalo; thence by the lake to Cleveland, from there to Franklin by stage. Here they lived an honored and respected life until a few years ago death separated them. Mr. NUTTING having been taken away, Mrs. NUTTING's home is now in Cleveland with her daughter, Miss Anna M. NUTTING. A copy of a paper showing an old-time, but I believe a wholly absolute custom of New England, that of publicly announcing the intention of the parties about to be joined by holy wedlock, has been given me by the daughter of the parties named. The Mr. WHITNEY, town clerk, who signed this paper was the father of Secretary WHITNEY of President CLEVELAND's cabinet.

Conway, Mass., Oct __, 1849. An intention of marriage between Mr. Eli NUTTING of Franklin Mills, State of Ohio, a mechanic by occupation, aged thirty-eight years, a single man, son of George NUTTING of Amherst, Mass., and Miss Julia CROSSETT of Conway, Mass., aged twenty-eight, daughter of Chester CROSSETT of Conway, hath been entered with me for the space of fourteen days, and due publication made as the law directs. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand on the day and year above mentioned. James S. WHITNEY Town Clerk, Conway, Mass.

Eliza PRICE and her sister, Mary P. were born in Plattsburg, N.Y. Their father dying, they were adopted by his brother William PRICE and came to Franklin in 1816. Both were young; Mary was married in 1824 to Benj. F. HOPKINS. She died a few years later leaving two daughters, both of whom are still living; Mrs. Eliza WEARD and Mary P. (Mrs. A.H. SILL) of Cuyahoga Falls. Eliza PRICE married Henry WETMORE of Cuyahoga Falls in 1826, and has lived in that place ever since, beloved by all who knew her. She is now eighty-seven years of age and

well preserved in mind and body.

In 1804 Diana SHELDON was united in marriage to Selah CLAPP in the town of Montgomery, Mass. In 1820 she moved with her husband and family of six children to Franklin, driving with a horse team the entire distance, and upon arriving here made a home on a farm about a mile east of the village. Upon this farm she continued to live until her death which occurred in August, 1850.

Mary BROWN was born in Montgomery, Mass. And removed to Franklin in 1832 with the family of her uncle Benjamin PHILLIPS. She was married in 1838 to Selah CLAPP, Jr., son of Diana SHELDON and Selah CLAPP. They lived on the farm formerly occupied by Mr. CLAPP's parents, and there reared their family. Three of their children are still living, a son, William, on a farm near Breakneck Creek, and two daughters, Delia and Lucy with their father since the mother's death in 1875.

Margaret HAYMAKER married John V. GARDNER in 1839. Her children were Mary, (Mrs. George STOUFFER) who died a few years since in Centralia; Washington, George D., and Estella (Mrs. Mark CHASE). She lived here all her life and died at a ripe old age with her daughters to care for her.

Mary A. HOLT (Mrs. Seneca GREEN) from Austerlitz, N.Y., was married and came to Franklin in 1837. She lived until 1876, leaving a family of affectionate children to mourn for her and care for her lonely companion; Sarah (Mrs. H.L. RUSSEL), Stephen, Spellman, Ann (Mrs. G.H. TAYLOR), Mary (Mrs. A.A. ROSS) and George, who with wife and family still lives in the old home of his parents.

Mary R. OLIN came to Franklin with her father's family (Arrin OLIN) from Genesee County, N.Y. in 1834, and the following year married James D. HAYMAKER to whom she bore twelve children, many of whom still reside in or near the township. She has a clear intellect, strong physique, and an unimpeachable integrity and has transmitted these qualities to her children and children's children, and still lives to enjoy their companionship.

Mary DICKINSON was born in Turin, N.Y., was married in 1825 to James PHERSON of Utica, N.Y. After his death she came with her parents to Ohio, living for some years in Stow. In 1844 she married Aaron FERRY and lived the remainder of her days in Franklin. She died in 1866. A child by her first husband is still living, and two by her second: Mrs. H.A. SWAN of Kent and Byron FERRY of Bloomfield, Ohio.

Clarissa CLARK married Ransom OLIN in 1843 and came with her husband to reside in the township soon after, living the remainder of her life on the farm which was their first home near Earlville. Here were born to her nine children, all of whom were living at the time of her death in the summer of 1884. Mrs. OLIN was a sister of Prof. CLARK, for many years connected with Mt. Union College. She was a large hearted woman, most kind and generous. Of her it might truly have been said "Her children rise up and call her blessed."

Lydia SHIRTLIFF came from Hampden, Mass. With her parents in 1819, was married in 1829 to Warren BURT. She was identified with the Disciple church of this place from its organization until her death, over sixty years. She left two children; Louisa A. (Mrs. T.M SAWYER) and Selah an honored citizen of Kent. Her husband still lives here with his son and wife.

Ruth OLIN, daughter of Ezra OLIN of Shaftsbury, Vt. Was married in 1824 to Joseph B. STRATTON of Bennington, Vt. They lived first in Genesee County, N.Y., afterwards in Wyoming County of the same state. In 1837 they came to Franklin, taking a farm of one hundred and thirty acres about two miles north of the village of Kent. Here they lived for years, until after many additions the farm had assumed greater proportions and they owned four hundred acres of valuable farming land. To them were born twelve children. At the celebration of their golden wedding in 1874 eleven of their children were living, ten of them being present on this occasion. The aged parents presented each of them with \$1,000 as a memorial of this happy event. Mrs. STRATTON died in 1877.

Mary YALE was born in Russell, Mass. In 1780, was married when twenty-six years of age to Dudley WILLIAMS and emigrated to Ohio in 1820. They were three months on the way, reaching Franklin on September 1 with four children. They took up about six hundred acres of land. Deer meat was their chief dependence for some years. They came into the country at a time when everything depended upon their own exertions. Mrs. WILLIAMS with the zeal and energy born of the time, undertook to help in some measure in the bread-winning for the family and went out weaving by the day.

At one time being belated in returning home at night, darkness overtook her on her way, and as there was no path except that made by the blazed trees, she soon became confused and after wandering about for some time gave herself up as lost and sat down to wait for – she knew not what. The wild beasts came close about her but did not molest her; a storm came up and drenched her

garments, and at last morning dawned and revealed the fact that she was quite a distance from home. The effect of the nervous shock and the exposure to storm and cold was too much for her naturally delicate frame; she never rallied from it and died not many years later at the age of sixty-three.

Maria HOPKINS was born in Fairfield, Vt. In 1809, daughter of Anna SCOTT and Rudd HOPKINS. She came to this state when a child and was married in 1834 to James WOODARD. She was the mother of ten children, seven of whom are still living. Her grandfather was killed in the Revolutionary war. Her great-uncle was Stephen HOPKINS, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Of her it could truly be said, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

Lucia DEMING PRICE Chairman and Historian Kent Committee – Mrs. Marvin KENT, Mrs. E.P. CONE, Mrs. M.A. HAUGHT, Mrs. S.P. STINAFF, Mrs. Marietta LINGCOY LATIMER