

PIONEER WOMEN OF BRECKSVILLE, CUYAHOGA COUNTY.

1811-1840.

Eighty-five years—that carries us back to the time when this section was a dense wilderness. Before the days of steamships, steam car, electric car, and bicycle; before the days of telegrams, telephones and X rays; before the days of stoves, furnaces, coal oil lamps, gas jets and electric lights; before the days of two cents a letter postage; before the days of stenographers and daily papers. About eighty-five years since the first white inhabitants settled in this wild forest region. Old times are they to us, but to these gray-headed mothers and fathers it seems but yesterday.

Starting from Cleveland near the mouth of the Cuyahoga river, going by the Valley R. R. and following the river

in a southerly direction for about sixteen miles, you come to a station named Brecksville. Stopping here and taking the road leading westward about two miles, you come to the village and center of Brecksville township the northeast corner township in Cuyahoga County. The deed of the township is dated April 30, 1807, and was given by the commissioners of the state of Connecticut. It received its name from John Breck, a native of Northampton, Mass., one of the original purchasers of the Western Reserve lands, and upon the division of the town among different proprietors he held title deeds for one-half the territory of Brecksville.

In June, 1811 Seth Payne, his wife,

two daughters, two sons and Melzer Clark, a young unmarried man, came from Williamsburg, Mass., and located in the southwestern corner of the township. Soon after their arrival Miss Almira, the oldest daughter, was married to young Clark, this being the first marriage in the township. Mrs. Clark began housekeeping on the opposite corner from her father and in Royalton township.

In 1810 Lemuel Bourn walked from Savoy, Mass., in about four weeks, a distance of 600 miles; selected the place in Brecksville for his future home; stayed one year, then, because of the sterling worth and highly prized daughters of New England, returned on foot to Massachusetts and married Miss Delia Wait. He bought a horse, and in 1811 Mrs. Lemuel Bourn mounted it, taking all she could with her and started with her husband, he walking most of the way, for their pioneer life in Brecksville, full of deprivations and hardships, and beset with many dangers, which were bravely met and patiently endured.

She was the mother of seven children, four of whom passed on before to welcome her coming. She was an early and active worker in the M. E. church; lived her three-score years and departed in the faith of a reunion hereafter.

In the spring of 1811 a settlement was made in the northeastern part of the township by the Browns, Donalsons, Stanfords and Mortons. In the summer of the same year near the center came the Bagleys and Waits. The following year quite a colony settled in the east part of the township, who had come to Boston township in 1809.

The settlers were greatly alarmed and in fear of the Indians, who roamed through the country, and for a time, a garrison was kept at the house of Seth Payne. The settlers could distinctly hear the cannonading at the battle of Lake Erie and hurried to Mr. Payne's. Soon a man came from the west on horseback and said Perry had had a fight with the British, was whipped and they must flee for their lives to Hudson. Panic stricken, they gathered together what they could carry, hid some things in the bushes, and some of Mrs. Payne's choice china dishes, which she brought from the east, put in a kettle and buried.

Mr. Payne having a horse, a yoke of

oxen and a cart, they started for the township of Boston, where there was quite a settlement and a block house of white oak logs, to hold a counsel. They concluded to send to Cleveland to learn the truth. John Wait volunteered to go. In the morning Wait mounted the horse, taking his rifle in front of him, and started for Cleveland. He found Perry had been victorious and returned about sunset.

There was a general time of rejoicing and in the morning they returned to their homes, but Mrs. Payne never found her kettle of dishes. They are supposed to be buried yet on the old Payne farm. Mrs. Payne was Hannah Nash before marriage.

About 1814

ORIANA PAYNE,

the youngest daughter of Mrs. Seth Payne, taught the first school in the township at the center in a log house, near where the town hall now stands, the Hoadley, Adams, Bradford and Wait children attending the school. The nearest schoolhouse at that time was in Newburgh. Oriana Payne married Symon Frost and settled at the center of Brecksville in 1815.

from the Mohawk Valley to Ohio. They came from Buffalo in a canoe; went ashore for the night, then "paddled their own canoe" in the day, landing in Cleveland, staying a year or more, then looking for the future advantage of their children they removed to Independence, Cuyahoga County. A grandson tells that, while living there, Mrs. Rufus Newel (Betsy Mather) when looking after her cow heard the report of a gun; heard the bullet whiz past her head, then another shot, and a white man came and asked her if she knew how near she came being killed. The first shot was by an Indian at Mrs. Newel, the second by the white man killing the Indian.

About 1812 they settled west of the center of Brecksville in the Chippewa valley. Mrs. Newel had four daughters. A very curious incident is related in connection with one of them, little Rebecca:

For a time she was in the habit of taking her porringer of bread and milk, or samp and milk, out of doors to eat it. No attention was paid at first to this child's whim, but presently it was noticed that she was growing thin and looked pale.

An effort was made to persuade her to eat within doors, which she resisted, and seemed so unhappy that again she was permitted to go out with her food, but was followed and observed and found sitting by a stump with a large rattlesnake eating from the same dish of milk. When he put his head in her side of the dish she would hit him with her spoon and say: "Eat on your own side, old gray." The mother went quietly back and the next day kept Rebecca in, killed the snake and found he had thirteen rattles. Miss Rebecca was afterward bitten by a rattlesnake. She married Rusha Bagley, of Brecksville.

Mrs. Aaron Rice (Pelonia Thompson), her husband, seven sons and three daughters, came from Deerfield, Mass., in 1813. Mrs. Joseph Edgerton (Candace Rice), her husband, six sons and three daughters, came from the same place a year or two later; Mr. and Mrs. Bolter Colson (Harriet Wait) in 1815. These early comers made a home for the families who came after or until they could clear a spot, roll logs together and move into their own house, with neither door or window.

In March, 1816, Mrs. Carey Oakes, her husband and two children, together with Mrs. William Oakes, her husband and two children, came from Hawley, Mass., to Brecksville with an ox team, and were forty days on their journey. Once, stopping for the night, an old squaw came in, took up the baby, and said she had made many a meal of a white

PAPPOOSE LIKE THAT.

Mrs. Carey Oakes' first house was made of poles and bark. Soon after getting settled in her new home, "Aunt Tamar" Oakes took her two children, went through the woods to a neighbor's, Mrs. Edgerton's, about a mile away, to warp a piece of cloth. She was so late in returning home that the wolves followed her, coming so near she could hear their panting at every step. She hurried along trying to determine which child to drop, Mary, the older, or Francis, the baby.

Just at his time the hired man, Alvin Cooley, came to her rescue, having been sent by Mr. Oakes to meet her. She was a woman of great determination and thoroughly hospitable; glad to share with, and help all who came to her home.

One of Brecksville's earliest settlers, Mrs. Isaac Wait, nee Jenkins, was left at home over night with a sister-in-law, Mrs. John Wait (Susannah Lothrop) for company, while Mr. Wait went to Hudson for supplies. In the night they heard the pigs squeal; they knew what that meant; Mrs. Wait determined the bear should not carry off the pig; she got up, took the rifle, but found it empty; she had heard that three fingers of powder was a load, so she put in powder three lengths of her finger, and as the bear was coming out with the pig, fired, then knew no more for some time, having been knocked down by the backward action of the gun. The bear could be tracked some distance by the blood, and the pig was saved.

In 1813 Mrs. John Wait became the mother of the first white child born in the township—a son—who now lives in Michigan, and Benjamin Wait was the first to walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

"Granny Timmons," Mrs. Mary Timmons, with her son Tommy came from Pennsylvania early in 1812 and made her home in the eastern part of the township, near the Cuyahoga river. She purchased quite a large tract of land and gave the ground for the Eastern cemetery to the township. Her husband was Thomas Timmons.

These New England settlers could not remain long without a place for public religious worship. In the summer of 1816, Rev. Wm. Hanford, employed by the Connecticut Missionary Society, began preaching in Brecksville once in four weeks; his congregation coming from five different townships—Boston, Brecksville, Independence, Royalton and Richfield. In July, 1816, he organized the first Presbyterian church.

Chloe, wife of Lemuel Hoadley; Harriet, wife of Bolter Colson; Hannah, wife of Seth Payne, and Zilpha Wait were of the original members. The first church was a log house built on the farm now owned by Irwin Edgerton; no glass in its windows, boards for seats, the means of warmth a small foot stove carried from home.

The Methodists organized a class in early pioneer days, held their meetings at private houses. Prominent among the early workers in that Society were Delia Wait, wife of Lemuel Bourn;

Martha Clapp, wife of David King; Mrs. Ezra and Mrs. Eliphalet Wyatt, (Lucinda Frazee).

There is no estimating the good to us from these early workers in the cause of righteousness.

The home of Mrs. Deacon William Oakes (Sally Cooley) was the home of the missionary. When he came the children were sent in different directions to notify the neighbors that there would be preaching.

Eliza Oakes being sent toward the center and going through a slashing came upon several young deer playing and skipping around. Being frightened and supposing them panthers she gave a fearful scream, which sent the deer bounding away fully as frightened as the child.

In 1832 Eliza married Luman Norville of Brecksville, thus the town being her home from a child of one year, for seventy-eight years.

Miranda Wallace was born in Petersham, Mass. 1806, and while a young woman came with her parents to Ohio. They came from Buffalo to Cleveland in the "Walk in the Water." Miranda fell overboard and was caught by one of the crew. Mr. Wallace settled in Hinkley, Medina County, for a year or two, then removed to Brecksville. Miranda married White Payne, August, 1827.

Mrs. Payne and her mother, Mrs. Daniel Wallace, nee Mary Aldrich of Massachusetts, pulled flax, hatched, spun, and wove it into cloth. Going to the brook to wash, Mrs. Payne would swing her little girl Ellen, Mrs. Julius Hannam, in a basket for fear of snakes. She had a barrel sawn in two for a tub, and did her washing with a batten board and a batten stick made by her husband, proving "Necessity the mother of invention."

Mrs. Aaron Barnes (Roxey Fenn) with her husband and family came from Sharon, Conn. in 1826. Their journey was by team to Albany, Erie canal to Buffalo, schooner Minerva to Cleveland, then by team to the western part of Brecksville. In a few years Mr. Barnes died, leaving Mrs. Barnes with a family of six children. She took up her work bravely and cheerfully. Her youngest son,

J. J. BARNES

tells that he never had a suit of clothes until after he grew to manhood, and was a teacher in a public school—that his mother had not spun, wove and made for him. Surely it may be said of her, "She looked well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed."

She combined the character of friend and neighbor, with that of nurse and physician. Was any one sick, Aunt Roxey Barnes was sent for, and she would take her bag of herbs, to go willingly and gladly. Many have cause to remember her on account of her faithful nursing and her skill in administering herbs.

In 1810 Elizabeth Farrer was married in Washington, Penn. to Andrew Dillow, and about 1830 came with her husband and two children to Brecksville and settled near the Cuyahoga river. She was truly kind and benevolent. No one could look on her face without feeling her perfect sincerity and goodness.

A year or two before, in 1826 or 1827, the Ohio canal was opened up through the Cuyahoga Valley, and the bilious fever raged fearfully; many were stricken by death, calls for help were many and urgent. Mrs. Deacon William Oakes, Mrs. Jane Breen and others of those brave women never failed or faltered, going night after night, and day after day, always ready to say:

"Here am I! send me."

Mrs. Morton's father, Daniel McKay, came to Independence, Cuyahoga Co., about 1820 with his wife, Catherine Coats and five children from Genesee County, N. Y. They had a team of horses and a sleigh, and from Buffalo to Cleveland they drove on the ice of Lake Erie. Mr. McKay was a fur trader and spent much time with the Indians. Susannah, his daughter, when a child, would spend a week at a time in the Indian wigwam and could speak their language quite well. The Indians would give her fine moccasins to wear, and treat her kindly, giving her all sorts of beads and trinkets.

In 1832 Susannah married David Morton and came to Brecksville, living here for some years. Her last days were spent in the city of Cleveland.

Miss Elizabeth Holland was born in 1789 in Columbia County, N. Y. She

was a cousin of Martin Van Buren, President of the United States, and was married July, 1817, to Hugh Stephenson, of Kenderhook, N. Y.

In 1818 they came west and located in Richfield, Summit County, Ohio, which was a dense forest; afterward removed to Brecksville, 1831.

Miss Lucy Bliss, eldest daughter of Mrs. Ichabod Bliss, was married in Brimfield, Mass., May, 1815, to Captain John Dunbar, of Worcester, Mass., a soldier in the war of 1812. In the year 1832 they emigrated with their eight children to the western part of Brecksville. Mrs. Dunbar suffered much from homesickness the first year or two of pioneer life. She was greatly instrumental in the organization of a church at the Corners of the town, which was subsequently transferred to the Presbyterian church at the Center.

Of her eleven children, Theresa died unmarried at the age of twenty-two years, and three remain in Brecksville. Lucy, her youngest daughter, the widow of Burr Van Noate; Thomas and Charles H. are retired farmers.

Our oldest, if not our earliest inhabitant, is Mother Boyd Hess (Elizabeth Sailor). She was born in Philadelphia, 1801, and has passed her ninety-fifth birthday. She came to Brecksville about 1840. She lives on her own place, in her own house by herself, and doing her own work, another family occupying rooms in the same house. She remembers seeing LaFayette in the great parade in Philadelphia, in honor of his visit in 1824. She married John Boyd of Pennsylvania; after his death Tobias Hess.

Mrs. Isaac Packard was the first landlady, her husband keeping tavern in a loghouse, where the Congregational church now stands. She was a Miss Polly Smith, of East Charlemont, Mass.

Mrs. William Burt (Thankful Strong) was a native of Massachusetts, and an early settler of Brecksville. She was quite a successful horticulturist, having many rare and beautiful plants for those early times, her flower garden being the admiration of everyone.

Mrs. Elizabeth Stoops Clifford was captured by the Indians during their raid through western Pennsylvania during the latter part of the last century, and carried to the vicinity of Sandusky. She was with the Indians four days, then

was rescued by a daring man named Brady, who was made famous by his great leap clearing the Cuyahoga river near Kent, and the place is known today as "Brady's Leap." Mrs. Clifford came to Brecksville in its early history, and soon after married Lot Cottle of Brecksville.

Mrs. Jason Janes (Wealty Burt) was a great reader, but in later years suffered entire loss of sight; she sweetly and patiently endured her affliction. She was a true, earnest Christian, as the lovely character of her daughters testify to their early training and her Christian example. Elizabeth Janes married Frank Ferry of Brecksville; Abbie became Mrs. Chester Cogswell, of Illinois.

One of our earliest and most efficient teachers, Miss Clarinda Edgerton, came in 1836 from Massachusetts to visit an uncle, Joseph Edgerton. She was a woman of unusual culture and refinement.

The next year after her arrival she began teaching in Brecksville. In 1839 she married Isaac Oakes, a resident, and now lives in her pleasant home near the Center with her daughter, Florence. She has passed her four score years, but retains more than unusual vigor of mind and body for her years. She has lived to see the log school house give way to a neat frame house, and nearly all these in turn to comfortable, brick buildings.

Among the few early settlers who are still with us, are Mr. and Mrs. Moses Hunt; they were formerly of Massachusetts. Mr. Hunt came in 1833, and Miss Emeline Dewey in 1834, and was married in Brecksville, May 27, 1834 to Moses Hunt. They have walked the way of life together for more than three score years. Theirs is one of the homes where everyone, young and old, desires to visit because of their cordial welcome, and their genial ways. Both have reached an advanced age; Mr. Hunt, eighty-seven, and Mrs. Hunt, eighty-five years, but show a lively interest in the works and workers of today.

With Mrs. Hunt I should remember

HERMINA THORPE,

who came to Brecksville and married Edward Rust in 1832. She was a neighbor, and one of the closest friends

of the Hunts through her life. She was ready with her tender kindness and quick sympathy for all who were burdened or sorrowing.

Mrs. Aquella Willett (Louisa Snow) was born on the shore of the Atlantic in 1812; her father, Henry Snow, brought his family from Maine to Ohio by private conveyance. The journey occupied about four weeks. Shortly after her father settled in Brecksville, a log school house was put up and Miss Snow placed in charge. She became very popular as a teacher, and her services were soon sought by the people of Hudson and Cleveland.

Her first work in Cleveland was in the Old Academy on St. Clair street. A brief and very happy married life was spent in Kentucky. She afterward returned to Ohio and taught in Norwalk Seminary. At the age of seventy-two she went to California, took up a homestead claim of 160 acres in Alpine, and now lives on a fine ranch beautifully located on the highest point of that region. Her life is spent working for others, and she is always cheery and patient, feeling that when the Father considers her work done, He will take her home.

She says of herself as a child:

"One day we were visited by the father of our teacher; he, the father, was himself a thorough, old school teacher. He listened to the reading and criticised, I being the smallest, stood at the foot of the class, trembling, for fear that he might find fault with me, but when I got through reading he said:

"There is one who will make a good school teacher in a few years."

That was the key note to all future ambition. To be a school teacher was the grandest idea of my young life. At fifteen years of age I began, and Andrew Freeze, one of Cleveland's early educators and superintendents was one of my first summer pupils."

Miss Emily Moses came from Victor, N. Y. to Independence with a sister, Mrs. Newland, in 1837, and the next year married Samuel Wallace of Brecksville. He owned a small farm and the canal boat Florida, which he ran on the Ohio canal. She boated with her husband a few seasons, having her children in the care of an aunt, Mrs. Newland.

Mr. Wallace died in 1850, leaving Mrs. Wallace and five children in com-

fortable circumstances. Mrs. Wallace was a thorough business woman and by her capability and energy accumulated a landed estate of 330 acres, and personal property that made her one of our wealthiest citizens.

Among her many good qualities she was pre-eminently charitable. She fully obeyed the scripture injunction "Let not thy left hand know what thy right doeth." She followed all her children down to the mysterious change from life to death, only Susanna, Mrs. Edward McCreery remaining, who now occupies her mother's beautiful home just north of the center.

Mrs. Otis Pomeroy (Maria Sabin) came from Massachusetts to Brecksville in early pioneer days. Her daughter Ellen tells of her mother having killed in all more than forty snakes in her house. She lived a year without either table or chair, and one pound of sugar; the sweetening in her home was only what her naturally happy sunny temperament supplied. Her husband would have given up and returned to his eastern home, but for her determination to stay and overcome all difficulties, and make for herself and family a home in this grand state of Ohio, and this fine healthy town of Brecksville.

Marana Morgan was born in East Bloomfield, N. Y. 1808. Her father, Dr. Isaac Morgan brought his family to Brecksville in the summer of 1816. He had about two years previously bought a farm in the northern part of the town, cleared some land and built a log house ready for the occupancy of his family. The lingering illness of his aged mother postponed his plans for two years. After her death the family started on their long journey through the woods to their new home in Ohio.

Early in the year of 1830, Marana was married to Thomas J. Allen. Mr. Allen was

THE POSTMASTER,

and for nearly twenty years their home was at the center of the township. Mrs. Allen became the mother of ten children, nine of whom grew to manhood and womanhood. Her husband died in 1849, leaving her the double burden, to direct and provide for her large family alone, and a more devoted and self-sacrificing mother never lived.

In 1853 Mrs. Allen married Col. John

Coates of N. Royalton, who soon afterward removed with his family to Brecksville.

With a courage born of her unselfishness, Mrs. Coates entered upon the task of rearing the young children of her husband in addition to her own. Her strict sense of justice always tempered with mercy added to her kind, sympathetic disposition, made it possible for her to fill her trying position creditably, and carry her work through to a successful close, when death ended her labors. Her children and stepchildren alike "rise up and call her blessed." She was of a quiet, retiring nature, which added to her many cares kept her closely confined to her family, a small circle of friends and relatives. It could be truthfully said of her "Those who knew her best, loved her most." Col. Coates died in June, 1873, and Mrs. Coates never recovered from the strain of his long illness, and the shock of his death. After three months of gradually failing health, she passed away September 26, 1873.

Mary Fenn O'Brien was born in 1795 at Charlotte, Vermont. She was married to Daniel O'Brien in 1812. In the spring of 1817 they emigrated to Brecksville; it was a long, tiresome journey. They came with a span of horses in a covered wagon and were thirty-two days on the road. The day after they were married they adopted two children, Lydia and Joseph, who came to Brecksville with them. When Mrs. O'Brien came to Brecksville she had three children, aged four, two years, and an infant ten weeks old, which she bore in her arms all the way. They settled in the northwest corner of the town, which was then a wilderness. He built a log cabin after the usual style, which they occupied a number of years. Their home, like other pioneers, was one of hospitality. Mrs. O'Brien was the mother of twelve children, five of whom are now living. She endured the toils and privations incident to a pioneer life. She died in Cleveland in 1876.

Mrs. Lucy Dwight Jewett, born in Northampton, Mass., married Enoch Jewett. They moved to Brecksville in 1830. She was the mother of four children.

Fanny Clapp Clark, born in Easthampton, Mass. 1789, married Capt. Fred Clark in 1809. She was the mother of ten children, of whom four sons died in infancy. In July, 1830, she with her husband and five children emigrated to Ohio and settled on a farm in the northern part of Brecksville, which was then a wilderness. The last day's ride over the roughest kind of road in a rough, lumber wagon completed the journey to Brecksville. For want of a better place they went into a shanty, kindly offered them by neighbors, until they could build a cabin.

Soon after they came to Brecksville her husband with neighbors was engaged in cutting a road through the woods one-half mile from their shanty. Mrs. Clark cooked their dinner, and with her children started through the woods by blazed trees to carry it to them; they got there all right and then went to a neighbor's to spend the afternoon. When time to go home the neighbors went with them to start them on the right track; but Mrs. Clark, so unused to following blazed trees, soon lost her bearings and they wandered about in the woods completely lost. It grew dark, and to add to the darkness, began to rain. Mrs. Clark cried for help, and her shrill wild screams rang out through the deep dark woods. After repeated calls she was heard, and answering calls came faintly to them at first, growing louder and nearer, until after awhile great was their joy to find they were at last found by the same kind neighbors they had left a few hours before.

MRS. ARMINDA DILLOW,

Chairman and Historian.

Brecksville Committee—Mrs. Martha Chaffee, Mrs. Sarah Rust, Mrs. Susan McCreery, Mrs. Ella Bratton, Miss Florence Oakes, Mrs. Mary Breen.

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