

ment, Kent came into the wilderness alone, with only his axe, gun and a small tent, settled himself near the base of a sheltering hill and went manfully to work. He cut the first tree ever felled in Paxton Township in preparation for actual settlement, and for about six months of the year he thus worked alone in the wilderness. At the time there was not an actual settler in Ross County, and a fierce Indian war was drawing to a close, without Kent's knowledge. But amid the loneliness and dangers of the forest, infested by wild beasts and savages, William Kent persevered, cleared the first corn-field in Paxton and earned his fifty acres of woodland. The land thus cleared embraced the ground long afterward occupied by the Seymour house. It was originally erected in 1805 by Reeves, who occupied it for many years as a tavern on Zane's Trace. The property continued in the ownership of Reeves and Kent until 1832, when it passed to David Adams who sold it soon afterward to R. R. Seymour, a Virginian.

MASSIE'S MANSION IN THE WILDERNESS

After his work as surveyor of the military lands was completed, General Massie began to look about him for a place to build him a home—a place where he might enjoy the repose which his arduous labors of the past years had so well earned. In the course of his services as surveyor he had become, by one means and another, the owner of large tracts of land at various places in the country of the Scioto, and it was from these that he had to choose. Among his possessions was a body of land in Paxton Township embracing the farms subsequently owned by Austin Pepple, Joseph West, the Dunn heirs, and other property, extending from Paint Creek up Massie's Run beyond the present Cynthiana Pike. This large and fine tract of land Massie resolved to make his home farm. Upon the base of the first hill back of Paint Creek, where a natural platform of a few acres, skirted by a small stream, offered a slightly and healthful position, he built his house in the year 1800. It was a spacious and solid structure, the first approaching the modern idea of comfort which was erected in Paxton. Every nail driven in its erection was forged by hand, with hammer and anvil. Every timber was cut from the soil and selected for its office; no economy of material or labor marked the work, and for about a century it defied the usual destructive assaults of time.

To this mansion in the wilderness Massie brought his young wife, fresh from the luxuries of her Virginian home, and installed her as its mistress. It must have been a trying experience to her, a delicately reared and cultivated woman, to turn her back on civilization and share the hardships of a frontier life. Massie was every inch a man, but he was no "carpet knight," and a life of

exposure, hardships and danger, had made him, though warm at heart, somewhat rough in speech and manner. So long as he lived his house was open to all, and a warm welcome especially awaited any of his old comrades of the trail who might visit him. McDonald tells us, in quaint language, of the lavish hospitality of his home; how he could not do enough for his uncouth companions; how his table groaned with its superfluity, and how the delicate hands of Mrs. Massie passed among her husband's guests, seated about the fire-place after supper, cups of fragrant tea. This last custom was a new one to McDonald, and he tells us that he regarded it as "rather a foolish" fashion.

Massie, though settled in a comfortable home and free from such dangers as he had encountered in the past, was by no means idle. On Massie's Run, near the house of J. W. Fernow, he established, about the year 1800, the first sawmill in Paxton, on Paint Creek; he enabled the Smith brothers to build a grist-mill, and himself built the first still-house in the township. In that year the Smiths founded the Town of New Amsterdam on the northern shores of Paint Creek. On his farm in Paxton General Massie built, at a somewhat later day, a furnace, where he manufactured iron for some time. Take into consideration the developing and management of a farm of several thousand acres, the oversight of large tracts at other points, the selling of land and the trouble incident to finding funds for all these various enterprises, and for the payment of a large indebtedness contracted in the original purchases; and it will be readily believed that Nathaniel Massie did not eat the bread of idleness. Here we have to do only with that part of his life which has a bearing on the development of Paxton. In this first house the husband and wife lived, and when they died both were buried on the hillside west of the old homestead, and rested there until June, 1870, when their remains were removed to the cemetery at Chillicothe. On the worn sandstone slab, which marked his grave in Paxton, is this inscription:

"In memory of Nathaniel Massie, who was born December 28, 1763, and died November 3, 1813, in the fiftieth year of his age.

" "It must be so, our father Adam's fall
 And disobedience, brought this lot on all.
 All die in him, but hopeless should we be,
 Blest revelation, were it not for thee!
 Hail, glorious gospel! heavenly light, whereby
 We live with comfort and with comfort die.
 We view beyond this gloomy scene, the tomb,
 A life of endless happiness to come.' "

Passing on, we find that the settlement became quite general in the year 1800.

THE TOWNSHIP UNDER TERRITORY AND STATE

Paxton Township was erected by the territorial government during the year 1800, and then embraced all of Ross County west of the Scioto River, as well as portions of the territory now included in Fayette and Highland counties.

On the fifteenth day of May, 1802, the inhabitants of the township, having met at the house of Christian Platter for the purpose of electing township officers, selected the following persons: William Kent, clerk; Thomas Dill, Michael Harr, Thomas Keer, Joseph Taylor, and Samuel Teter, overseers of the poor; Zachariah Taylor, John Wilson, Christian Platter, fence viewers; Nathan Massie, Enoch B. Smith, and John Combs, appraisers of houses; John Combs, lister of property; Frederick Braugher, John Brown, Hugh Cochran, William Pellers, James Wilson, and James Curry, supervisors of highways; John Combs, John White, and Jacob Harr, constables. The above named persons being sworn, entered on the duties of their respective offices; twenty-four township officers in all.

At an election held at the house of Christian Platter the 4th day of April, 1803, the following township officers were chosen according to law: William Kent, clerk; Nathan Reeves, Noble Crawford, William Taylor, Sr., trustees; Robert Holliday, Reuben Brister, overseers of the poor; Zachariah Taylor, Benjamin McClure, Joseph Rockhold, fence viewers; Samuel Jordan, Lucans Hawkins, appraisers of houses; Isaac Hartman, lister of taxable property; Jacob Davis, Christian Platter, Abraham McCoy, Daniel Harr, John Brown, supervisors of highway; Talbot Ward, Jacob Harr, constables. Thus ended the township government under the Northwest Territory.

By an act to incorporate townships passed at the second session of the First General Assembly of the State of Ohio, on the second day of April, 1804, the inhabitants (or electors) having met at the house of Christian Platter, for the purpose of electing township officers, the following were chosen: William Kent, clerk and treasurer; Robert Dill, Christian Platter, Jared Irwin, trustees; Zuri Combs, John Torbet, overseers of the poor; Thomas Edmonson, Elisha Kelley, fence viewers; Samuel Jordan, Thomas Massie, listers of taxable property and house appraisers; Robert Edmonson, Thomas Dill, John Swan, Spencer Records, Enoch B. Smith, supervisors of highway; Joshua Davis, Benjamin McClure, John White, constables.

MASSIE FOUNDS BAINBRIDGE

After the failure of New Amsterdam, General Massie sought a more favorable site for a village, and in 1805 laid out Bainbridge.