

A COMPLETE HISTORY

— OF —

FAIRFIELD COUNTY, OHIO, //

— BY —

HERVEY SCOTT.

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STATEMENT OF SAMUEL KESTER, OF AMANDA
TOWNSHIP.

My father, George Kester, was one of the first settlers at Yankee Town, now Claypool's neighborhood, in Greenfield Township. He first settled on the Richard Hooker place. This was in 1799. Subsequently he bought land in Amanda Township, the same on which I now reside, three miles east of the village of Royalton, where he died in April, 1852, at the age of 72 years. I am his only surviving son. I was born in Fairfield County, and have lived on the same place all my life.

There was a little log school-house on Kemp's land, near our place. It was the first place I went to school. The first teacher I remember there was James Granthum. It was in 1852. The logs of that little school-house were removed and rebuilt on the Jesse Spurgeon place, two miles west of Lancaster, near the Cedar Hill pike, where they still stand. The next school I attended was on the Hutchison farm. A teacher there that I remember, was John Cunningham. The logs of that house are now used as a stable near the pike, three miles east of Royalton.

The first religious meetings I remember were held in a log school-house in Royalton, by the Lutherans. The Methodists had a society there. They sometimes held their meetings in barns. The United Brethren preached at the houses of George Grow and Jacob Bullenbaus. This was from 1828 to 1832.

The first funeral that took place in the Yankee Town settlement, was in 1801 or 1802; I have forgotten the man's name. He died on Black Lick, in what is now Licking County. He came out with the company that settled at the Claypool place, or was a relative, and they brought his remains down there for interment. There were no roads, and the body was brought by two horses, in the following manner: Two long poles were cut. A wagon-cover was made fast to them, after the manner of a hammock; upon this the body was laid, and the poles suspended on the backs of the horses, which were prepared with pack-saddles, one horse before, and the other in the

rear. The distance was several miles. There was neither planks nor cabinet-makers in the settlement, and a coffin was improvised with slabs split from large trees. The slabs were set in the dug grave, the body lowered, and a wide slab laid for the lid, upon which the clay was filled in. This statement I received from my parents.

The first wedding I remember was that of my uncle, Jacob Harrison, to Julia Ann Hanaway. She died six weeks afterwards.

Wolves swarmed all over the country at the beginning of the settlements, and for a number of years subsequently.

For some time after my father built his cabin, there was no door-shutter, and to close the opening, called the door, a wagon-cover was suspended in it. Wolves howled around daily. When sheep were first introduced, they were herded and watched through the day, and shut up in a strong log-pen at night, to preserve them from the jaws of the wolves. The first years in the Yankee Town settlement the ague attacked almost everybody, and that was the principal reason why my father moved further west.

The following were the principal first settlers of that section of what is now Greenfield Township: Father McFarland, who was the father of the late Walter McFarland; Mr. Cherry, and others I cannot now name. Our neighbors in Amanda Township, at my first recollection, were Tunis Newkirk, father of Jephthah Newkirk; Grandfather Kemp, Henry Kemp, Theodore Williamson, Henry Ingman, Henry Kiger, William Kiger, Richard Herrod, Widow Osborn, who was familiarly known as Granny Osborn. (She was one of the very first settlers.)

Deer and wild-turkeys were abundant; and occasionally a bear. Wild-cats were quite plenty; hawks were very troublesome in the destruction of chickens.

Our first grinding was done at the rock-mills. But in the very early times the men went all the way to Chillicothe to mill, packing their grists on horseback. Salt was first brought from Zanesville, on horseback. It cost from \$3 to \$5 for fifty pounds, which was called a bushel.

First roads were made through the woods by following the blazed trees from cabin to cabin. Dancing was practiced to

some extent by the young people; and we played the old plays of "Sister Phœbe," and kindred plays.

It was no uncommon thing for the young people to go to church, or "meeting," as it was called then, barefooted; and older people too, in some instances. The reason for this was the scarcity of shoes, as well as the inability on the part of the people to always command the means of paying for them.

Our manner of living was in accordance with the general pioneer life of the times. The old time hominy-block was found in every cabin, and spinning-wheels, and reels, and the corn-grater. Our clothing was mostly home-made. We had to work hard, and had very little time for play. The wants of the people were fewer than at present, and more easily met, for our real requirements were natural, and we were satisfied.

STATEMENT OF SAMUEL GRIFFITH, OF AMANDA TOWNSHIP.

My father, Isaac Griffith, emigrated from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1818, and settled in Amanda Township, on the place known as the Leathers Tavern, adjoining the present village of Amanda on the south-east corner. At that time the site of Amanda, and all the surrounding country, was in a wild condition. There were a few small settlements in different parts of the township, mostly living in rude log-cabins, and small farms were opened; but there were neither good roads nor markets.

The best house in the community was the Leathers house. It was of hewed logs, and two stories high. Mr. Leathers settled there at a very early day, and had kept a tavern many years. At the time of our coming there was neither a frame nor a brick building in the township. My father kept tavern in the Leathers House about twenty-five years, or until his death, which occurred in 1855. The house burnt down in 1858 or 1859.

Our neighbors at the time of coming there, in 1818, were Abram Kestler, Abram Myres, John Welsheimer, Frederick