

Pioneer Sketches



BAINBRIDGE

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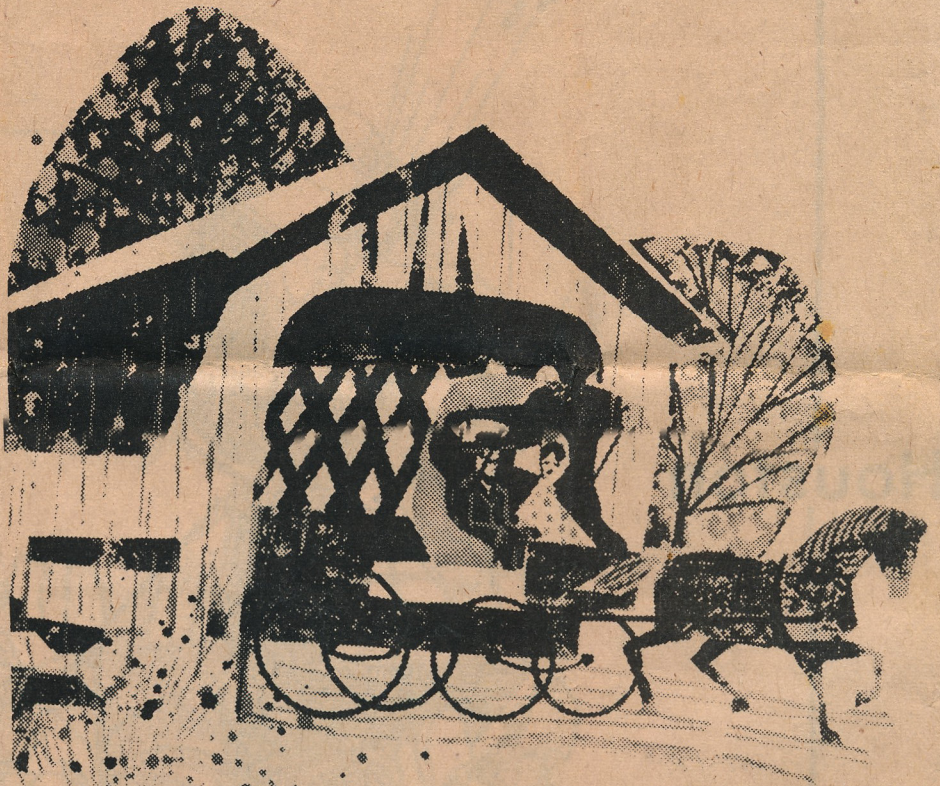
It will be of interest to many of your readers to learn something of the history of Simon Henry, who was one of the early pioneers of Geauga County, and whose grandsons, Nelson C. Henry, King W. Henry, and Capt. Charles E. Henry, now residing on various parts of the original farm in Bainbridge, still preserve, in their several lines, the family name.

Simon Henry was born in Lebanon Crank (now Columbia,) Tolland County, Ct., Nov. 27, 1766, the eldest of nine children. His father, John Henry, eldest child of Robert and Eleanor Henry, was born in Stowe, Middlesex County, Mass., Jan. 8, 1742-3, from which place the family soon removed and settled in the southwest corner of the neighboring town of Groton. On the petition of Robert Henry and others, this part of Groton was organized Jan. 5, 1753, as the town of Shirley, and here a hill, through which the Fitchburg railroad makes a deep cut, is still called Mt. Henry.

Robert Henry died in Shirley, in 1759, leaving a widow and seven children, some of whom subsequently removed to Lebanon, New London County, Conn. Their mother, Eleanor, was still residing with her eldest son John, at the time of her death, in Enfield, Hartford County, Conn., Nov. 23, 1807, aged 84. About 1766, John married Mary Gager, a daughter of Rev. Wm. and Mary Allen Gager, a graduate of Yale College, pastor of the second Church of Lebanon, and a great-great-grandson of Wm. Gager, a surgeon, who came to America with Gov. Winthrop in 1630.

John Henry had a brief record of service from the town of Lebanon in the Revolutionary War; resided successively in Lebanon, Lebanon Crank, Bolton and Enfield, Ct., and finally died in Enfield, Jan. 9, 1819, aged 76. He was a mason by occupation, and is said to have built many a stack of chimneys in the factory and mill towns of the Connecticut Valley. Mary, his wife died in Enfield, May 31, 1812, aged 67.

Their children were Simon, the subject of this sketch; Gager, William, Samuel, Lois (wife of Daniel Pease,) Eleanor, (wife of Augustus Prior,) Mary, (wife of Elijah Holkins,) Cynthia, (wife of



Simon Bush,) and Sarah, or Sally, (wife of Abel Merrill), Samuel Henry at one time bought land in Bainbridge, but never lived there. Some of the Bush family, however, afterwards removed to Bainbridge.

In 1792, at Enfield, Ct., Simon Henry married Rhoda Parsons, daughter of John Parsons, a soldier of the Revolution, who was the great-great-grandson of Benjamin Parsons, of Springfield, Mass., a family of high repute. This young couple, soon after the birth of their eldest son in Enfield, removed first to Middlefield, Hampshire County, Mass., where their second son was born, and thence, a year or two later, they crossed the county line into Washington, Berkshire County, where eight more children were born to them.

The western part of Massachusetts was then, as now, a region of wild and beautiful woods and mountain scenery, but of thin and unfruitful soil. Here, however, they remained for about 25 years, cultivating the lands which they had purchased. Among the substantial citizens of Washington, none was more respected and honored than Simon Henry, for the town records show that he was repeatedly chosen Moderator of their annual meeting, and chairman of the board of selectmen, besides discharging many other public functions down to the very date of his removal to Ohio. In 1812-13 he represented the town in the General Court at Boston, and about the same time one of his sons served their country in the second war with Britain.

Notwithstanding this apparent prosperity midst the Berkshire hills, New Connecticut, as the Western Reserve was then called, offered many attractions, especially to a farmer with a

large family of sons. Fully a quarter of the people of Washington emigrated to the west between 1815 and 1820, and Simon Henry, anxious to give each of his sons a farm, sold his lands in Massachusetts and bought a large tract in Bainbridge from Simon Perkins, of Warren.

To Ohio, therefore, with wife and eight children, (two older ones, Orrin and John, having gone ahead the year before,) he removed in 1817. The diary of his journey, still preserved by N. C. Henry, is terse and almost void of incident; but there is a pathetic interest in the brief chronicle, which begins: "We started from home Sept. 18, on Thursday in the afternoon;" and on Nov. 1, after 45 days of weary travel, the last entry is, "Saturday night, home." Truly home is where the heart is.

Their children were: Orrin, born at Enfield, Ct., Oct. 17, 1792; married Dincey Thompson, Mar. 16, 1827; had a large family and moved to Illinois. William, born in Middlefield, Mass., Nov. 3, 1794; married Rachel McConoughy, and had seven children, of whom King W., the sixth, still lives in Bainbridge; John, born in Washington, Mass., Sept. 28, 1796; married Polly Jaqua, July 1, 1819, and had nine children, of whom Mrs. Martha Ann Brewster and Capt. Charles E. Henry still live in Bainbridge.

He died Jan. 10, 1869, ages 72. Rhoda, born in Washington June 30, 1798, married Robert Root and had five children, of whom the third, Delos, still resides in Bainbridge. Anne Osborne, born March 26, 1800, married Jasper Lacey and had 10 children. Mary, born Jan. 9, 1802, married Elijah French, and died without issue. Simon Nelson was born in Washington, Mass., July 27, 1803. Calvin Parsons, born March 24, 1807, married Lorette Jackson, Sept. 4, 1832,

and had four children, of whom Nelson C., the second, still lives in Bainbridge. Milo born Mar. 9, 1810, married Chloe Ann B. Osborn, Feb. 24, 1833, and had two children. Newton, born Mar. 27, 1813, served in the Seminole War, and was afterwards mate of a whaling vessel. He died at sea, unmarried.

Rhoda Parsons Henry, the mother of this family, was born in Enfield, Ct., Mar. 13, 1774, and died in Bainbridge, June 15, 1847, aged 73 years. Simon Henry, her husband, was for many years a justice of the peace in Bainbridge, and died there June 26, 1854, aged 87 years. Both are buried in the old southeast burying ground. Such is the life history of a couple who lived for many years in each of three States, and were pioneers in both Western Massachusetts and Northeastern Ohio.