

A COMPLETE HISTORY

— OF —

FAIRFIELD COUNTY, OHIO,

— BY —

HERVEY SCOTT.

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STATEMENT OF JACOB BOPE, OF PLEASANT TOWNSHIP.

Abraham Bope, father of Gen. Jacob Bope, of this county, and of Philip Bope, of Lancaster, emigrated from Rockingham, Virginia, in the year 1803, and located six miles north of Lancaster, in Pleasant Township. His brother, Frederick Bope, and Henry Ketner accompanied him, and located in the same neighborhood. It was late in the fall, or beginning of winter when they arrived, and a camp was erected by the side of a big log, where they spent the winter. In the spring a cabin was erected, into which they moved. It is not said whether the Ketner family shared the winter camp by the big log, but that is the inference.

In the following fall there came and settled in the same region John and Benjamin Feemen, Casper Walters and Jacob Weaver. The second fall after the arrival of the Bopes and Ketner, a considerable colony came out and settled round in the same neighborhood.

Mr. Bope, now in his seventy-ninth year, preserves distinct recollections of the times and incidents of the infant colonies which were begun there over seventy years ago, and detailed them with great readiness.

The Indians, chiefly Wyandots and Delawares, were all over the country in small hunting squads, often camping near the cabins of the white settlers. They were harmless, and the young folks often went out and looked at them while they sung and danced. The first roads through the settlements were over blazed paths. The Bopes and Ketner were two days getting from Lancaster out to their destination, having to cut their way through the thickets. The men of the early settlers were mostly hunters.

On one occasion Abraham Bope was returning from a hunt, or possibly from a trip to some neighboring cabin, when night overtook him before he reached home. He suddenly found himself surrounded with wolves. He fired upon them, but failed to scare them away. They seemed to press him, and

becoming alarmed he clambered up into the top of a sapling or small tree. He loaded and fired again, but finding that his unpleasant and most unwelcome companions were inclined to stay by him, he set up a volley of stentorian shouts, which at last reaching the ears of some of his nearest neighbors, brought several men to his aid. But the men, on arriving near enough to communicate with the man up the tree, finding that the wolves were not inclined to give up their expected prey, they thought caution the better part of valor, and advised Mr. Bope to remain in the tree till daylight, when the wolves would go away. Which advice he took, and found, to his great joy, that with the disappearance of the darkness the wolves disappeared also.

A bear was discovered near his house. He took his favorite old Virginia dog, and his gun, and went to the attack. His first shot wounded the beast and made him savage. His dog went in, and was gathered to the embrace of Bruin, who was about to press the last breath of life out of him, when Mr. Bope went to his dog's rescue, when the bear instantly dropped the dog and made chase after the man, and was not long in fastening his teeth in the garments of the frightened hunter. At this moment Mrs. Bope arrived, and perceiving the state of affairs, advanced on the beast in a menacing attitude, which seeing, the quadruped released his hold and made for the gentler sex. There was a hickory-tree close by, that had been broken by a storm, the upper end of the trunk still resting on the stump twenty feet from the ground, and the top lying on *terra firma*, thus forming an inclined plane of about forty-five degrees with the perpendicular. Mr. Bope called to his wife to run for her life; but she being in the vigor of young womanhood, at once began the ascent of the angle of forty-five.

The dog by this time recovered his breath, and came again to the attack; and in the meantime Mr. Bope had re-loaded, and now poured in another broadside, without, however, bringing down his game. Bruin placed his back against a tree, in an upright posture, the better to use his powerful paws; and while he was thus compelled to turn his head in all directions from which a deadly foe might be approaching, his eye caught sight of Mrs. Bope snugly perched on the stump twenty feet above. In an instant he made for the stump, and

began the ascent. And now the *finale* approached, for Abraham Bope, Esquire, comprehending that from the positions of all the actors in the drama he was absolute master of the situation, at once placed a ball in a vital part, and the bear fell dead at his feet. Seven charges were said to have been lodged in his body before he capitulated.

Mr. Jacob Bope said the first school he attended in the new settlement was German, and taught by Henry Camp. Afterward an English school was taught in the neighborhood by Abraham Winters, over on the Newark road. This was previous to 1810, and when he was eight or ten years of age.

The first preacher he remembered to have heard was the Rev. Mr. Stake of the Lutheran denomination, and afterward Rev. Wise, of the German Reform Church. Soon after this the Methodists and Albrights began their work, and established camp-meetings in some parts of the county, holding them annually.

In their settlement the meetings were held in the cabins of the settlers.

Everybody had to work hard, but were contented with what they had, and far happier, he believed, than the majority of the people are to-day. Money was seldom seen by anybody, and it was extremely difficult to pay what little tax was levied. A majority of the men of the settlement went out in the war of 1812. Of all those who were of men's age, and entitled to be called pioneers, and who came into the settlement previous to 1810, John Zeigler alone is living, at the great age of ninety-two years.

There was little that could be sold for cash. The price of a day's work, from sunup to sundown, was twenty-five cents, which was always spoken of then as a "quarter of a dollar." Jacob Bope was a carpenter, and often worked at his trade for fifty cents a day. He referred to the corn-huskings, house-raisings and log-rollings, and other gatherings and usages of the pioneer age, and which were the same everywhere, and need not to be particularized here.

He remembered Lancaster when there were not more than half a dozen cabins in it. He was a pupil in music of a Mr. Imhoff, and himself taught music when he was sixteen years old. Mr. Bope served as Captain, Colonel and General in the Ohio Militia. He spoke at some length of the pioneer man-

ners and customs, and of the social pastimes and the kindly relations that existed between all ranks and conditions, when every one was ready to help his neighbor. And when I repeated: "We're boldly marching to Quebec, where the drums are loudly beating;" and, "As oats, peas, beans and barley grows," his face dropped at least twenty-five years of its age.

Thus the past drifts back into the soon-to-be-forgotten, and to be buried beneath the debris of the dead ages. The merest inklings, or perhaps it were better to say scintillations, of the life and times of sixty and seventy years ago, lives to-day in the recesses of the minds and hearts of the aged. They come to the eye and the visage when referred to in speech, or song, or tune; but with the exception of here and there a breast, no responsive chord is struck. But to the man or woman who lived on the frontier threescore, or threescore and ten years ago, there is no joy on earth so sweet as these reminiscences that come floating through the inward thoughts like angel-whispers, of childhood and youth's first young loves and innocence. There we can go for consolation, and live with our own dear associations, when the present has nothing dear for us. It is the priceless boon which thieves cannot steal, and which none but ourselves can participate in.

The first death, Mr. Bope said, that occurred in their settlement, that he could recall, was that of his grandfather Bope, which took place soon after they came. He said he was a very good man, and always prayed with the children every night before they went to bed. There are four of Abraham Bope's children living—Jacob and Philip, and two daughters.

Daniel Arnold built the first mill. It was on Fetter's Run. Jacob Weaver built the first still-house; it stood on the land now owned by Philip Watson, adjoining the Bope farm. The first wool they had carded into rolls was done where Baltimore now is. Name of the owner of the carding machine not remembered.