

THE
DUFFIELD FAMILY.

SKETCH OF
WILLIAM DUFFIELD,
OF VENANGO COUNTY, PA.,
AND HIS DESCENDANTS.

1905

WILLIAM DUFFIELD.

WILLIAM DUFFIELD, the immediate ancestor of the large connection of that name in Western Pennsylvania, was the only son of Philip Duffield, and was born in England (some say Wales). Philip moved to Ireland and located in County Down near the village of Ballynahinch, about 15 miles south of Belfast, where he died.

William was born in the year 1743. He had two sisters older than himself, one of whom, Peggy, was blind from infancy. In the year 1760, when he was but 17

years old, he emigrated to America and returned twice, thus crossing the ocean five times. Each time in returning to Ireland he took over a cargo of flaxseed and other American products and brought back emigrants, he paying their passage and waiting repayment until they had earned the amount advanced.

On his second return voyage from Ireland the ship lost her reckoning in a storm and drifted for six months, the passengers becoming almost famished. They were put on daily rations of one jill of oatmeal and a few spoonsful of water until they met a vessel that supplied them with provisions and put them on their proper course.

The third and last time he came across the Atlantic there was among the passengers Elizabeth Hassan, of Belfast, a linendraper's daughter, his sweetheart, in company with her brother Robert and family, who were migrating to America. The ship was the last one that landed before the Revolution, and in fact after hostilities had commenced. After landing at Philadelphia, it seems William must have followed the army as a trader, furnishing cattle and supplies to the soldiers, as no record has yet been found of his having been in the enlisted service.

He was married to Elizabeth Hassan, above referred to, in 1777, and, as is believed to be the case, settled in Nittany Valley, Centre county, Pa., before he later settled in the Bald Eagle Valley, near the mouth of Fishing Creek, adjoining the village of Mill Hall and about three miles southwest of Lock Haven. The farm was located on land donated to a brother of Sam. Brady, the famous Indian fighter, and he had to "move on."

During the summer of 1799 he came with his eldest daughter, Jane, to Venango county and erected a cabin at the mouth of Sugar Creek. In the fall he returned, intending to bring back his family in the following spring, leaving his daughter to keep possession. With a small

dog and pig as her only companions, she remained until joined by the family at the close of the winter. On William's return he settled on a 400-acre tract of land situated on the south side of French Creek, one mile below Utica, where he resided until his death, April 7, 1827, at the age of 84 years.

He was a man of robust constitution and fine physique, of genial disposition, whole-hearted and of exceptional energy. He possessed good judgment and sound common sense, and was consulted in important matters by prominent men in his neighborhood. His wife, Elizabeth Hasson, was born in 1754, and died April 9, 1838, aged 84 years. Both were buried in the old cemetery at Franklin, Pa., where a monument marks the place of their rest. Ten children—four sons and six daughters, all of whom raised large families and lived to a ripe old age—were the result of their union.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND SKETCHES.

WILLIAM DUFFIELD.

Of the original Venango county pioneer, William Duffield,¹ the only son of Philip and Margaret (Armstrong) Duffield, the following is gleaned from a sketch dictated by William Duffield³ (son of John²), who died in 1803 :

“To my best recollection of the family history, my great-grandfather, Philip Duffield, migrated from England to Scotland, and at the time of the Rebellion left Scotland and located on his estate, called ‘Lord’s Dominion,’ near Belfast, Ireland, where he died. While living in Ireland my grandfather, Wm. Duffield, then a youth, became dissatisfied and decided to go to America. His parents opposed the project, and Lord Donegal undertook to compel him to remain. During a dispute over the matter his lordship struck William over the head with a cane, which the sturdy youth resented, giving his assailant a severe whipping. This compelled William to leave Ireland, and as the vessel in which he was to sail stayed in port for several weeks, he remained aboard in hiding during that time. He twice returned to Ireland. On his third departure for this country he was accompanied by Robert Hassan, of Belfast, and sister, Elizabeth, whom he afterwards married. On the same vessel were three young McCalmont brothers, who became progenitors of the branches of that name in Pennsylvania. After the Revolutionary war grandfather settled in Centre co., Pa.”

The following is from a sketch by the late Adaline (Cochran) Craig and her brother, the late Charles Cooper Cochran³ :

“On grandfather's last visit to Ireland he wished to marry Elizabeth Hassan, whom he had known from her childhood. The proposal was accepted by her. Her father, a linen draper who lived in Belfast, and who was considered a wealthy man, had no objection to the match, but would not consent to her going to America. Grandfather enlisted her brother Robert in his cause, and the two formed and carried out a plan. Robert sailed in the same ship with William, bringing his sister with him, a fact that was not discovered until three days after her departure. Her father had told her that if she went to America he would disinherit her. He made his threat good; she never received a farthing from him.

“Robert Hassan located in what is now Trumbull or Mahoning county, O., and his sister made her home with his family, where, in 1777, the two Belfast lovers reunited and were married. After the marriage grandfather took her to his Centre county home, where their ten children were born.

“In 1777 grandfather located in the Nittany Valley, Centre co., Pa. In those days settlements were sparse in central Pennsylvania. Indians were roving everywhere; the settlers were in constant fear of outbreaks, and the old flintlock muskets were always kept primed. About 1799, finding their tenure of the land they had settled on to be uncertain, a number of families, including grandfather's, concluded to come further west. The families being large, they wanted more land, anyhow.

“Early in the summer of 1799 Wm. Duffield took the Indian trail for the western part of the State, bringing with him his daughter, Jane, and his son, William, the former a young woman in her 'teens and the latter a sturdy lad of eleven years. Arriving in the then wilderness on French Creek, above Franklin, they pitched their tent on the banks of the stream, about seven miles from

its mouth, where they located what is known as the old Duffield farm. They built a cabin, cleared a field, and sowed it in wheat. Jane assisted in clearing the ground.

"In the fall the father returned east, leaving Jane and her brother to hold possession until he could bring the rest of the family to their new home. They came in the spring of 1800. Our mother (Elizabeth) being the baby, was honored with a ride on the pack-horses, the parents and the rest of the children walking. On their journey they forded the Allegheny river where the town of Tionesta now stands, and then struck west across the country to the mouth of Sugar Creek, a little south of their future home.

"Like all of the early settlers, William and Elizabeth Duffield had to endure many privations and hardships, but they were equal to the emergency, and with wisdom and fortitude born of Christian faith assisted in planting moral and material progress in Western Pennsylvania. They were steadfast believers and doers of the Word, and inculcated in their children the great truths of the Bible. At a ripe old age they were garnered into the granary of the Lord, whom they had so faithfully served all their lives."
