

# SOME PIONEERS

OF

Washington County, Pa.

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A FAMILY HISTORY

BY

F. S. READER.

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1902:  
PRESS OF F. S. READER & SON,  
NEW BRIGHTON, PA.

In 1784 William Reader and family moved from Rowington to Honily, which lies about three miles west of Kenilworth, and about five miles northwest of Warwick. The Ravenshaw estate at Solihull, is about fifteen miles west of Kenilworth. The descendants of these families were to be found in Warwick, Coventry, Kenilworth, Honily, Wraxall, Birmingham, Stratford-on-Avon, etc.

William Reader determined to go to America, and sold his farming stock by auction at Honily on Monday and Tuesday March 12 and 13, 1804. He took with him to his new home all his family except his eldest son, William.

They left Liverpool, England, June 11, 1804, on the American ship "Washington," and reached Philadelphia, Pa., August 15, after a voyage of 65 days, part of which was very stormy and dangerous.

The family remained in the neighborhood of Philadelphia for some weeks, and while here Mr. Reader wrote a very interesting letter to his son William about the people in that section, which is worthy of preservation, as show-

ing the impressions our country made on the minds of these English people.

He said in part: "The people here live comfortable and happy, and every person is well dressed and fed. I have not seen a beggar or person of miserable appearance, such as your unhappy country abounds with. There is not the haughty ways in the rich, nor miserable servility in the poor, but all converse on an equality; and the working people are much better informed, and speak better language, than in England. Every one here let his profession be what it will, may support a family, however numerous, with credit and decency, and lay up something for a rainy day. What a striking contrast between this and England! There it has cost me many a bitter heartache to see a man covered with rags, slaving for a scanty pittance of bread and water, to support a miserable family, without the least prospect of being relieved from it for the remainder of his life."

In the fall he bought a wagon and some horses and started for Pittsburg, undergoing the hardships incident to the traveling of that day over the mountains, and through the wilderness every where, but reaching the goal of his long journey happy in the thought of founding a home of his own, and for his children, among the people of the free and promising new country. From this point, then a mere village, he made inquiries for land, and traveled many miles in different directions, to find a site for a home.

Among the other places he visited was the "Forks of the Beaver," at the junction of the Mahoning and Shenango rivers in Lawrence county, Pa., where the old Indian town

of Kuskuskee once stood, passing along the old Indian trail up the Beaver, through the present town of New Brighton, and the now prosperous valley of the Beaver, then almost a continuous wilderness, with but few homes of white men.

Here he found a 'new settlement,' of which he says: "We found the people very poor, lived in worse huts than we ever saw and very few of the conveniences of life about them. Their chief employment is hunting. They will take a rifle on their shoulders and be out in the woods for several days and nights together hunting deer and wild beasts.. When the place begins to grow they sell the improvements and go back, and people who are more industrious and civilized fill up their places." He remained there eight days and then returned to Pittsburg, not caring to settle among so migratory and uncivilized a people.

After returning to Pittsburg, he looked at several improved plantations, and finally selected one on the Monongahela river, in Nottingham township, Washington county, Pa. It contained over 200 acres, for which he was to pay eight dollars per acre. He entered into an article of agreement February 1, 1805, to purchase it.

He described its improvements in a letter to his son, as 'a new house which cost \$1,000, a barn, stable and some other outbuildings, and a whiskey distillery, which proved the ruin of the family (that once owned it and built the distillery) for they all but two died by the love of it.' He located the plantation as "fifteen miles from Pittsburg, 15 from Washington, and 19 from Redstone, all market towns. It is about three miles above Elizabeth on the opposite side and about a mile from the river. It is a very thickly

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settled part of the country, there are four corn mills within two miles of it, a saw mill, a Presbyterian meeting house, twelve stills for whiskey, a tanyard, a porter brewery, and what I prize as much as any of them, a very good school within half a mile of the house. We have two Englishmen for next neighbors, one Wm. Castleman and wife, and the other John Holcroft from Lancashire, Eng., who came to this country before the Revolution."

John Holcroft was a prominent figure in the Whiskey Insurrection, and was at one time reputed to be the notorious "Tom the Tinker" of that period, which was afterwards found to be incorrect. Mr. Reader had great faith in Mr. Holcroft, and turned to him as the adviser of his family in his property interests, while he made a business trip to his old home in England. From that time the two families were close friends, and intermarriages occurred among their descendants. Mr. Reader died in 1808, and the property was deeded to his widow, Mary Reader, and their children, May 27, 1811.