

CIRCLEVILLE REMINISCENCES,
A DESCRIPTION OF CIRCLEVILLE,
OHIO (1825-1840)

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**CIRCLEVILLE, OHIO
REMINISCENCES**

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CIRCLEVILLE

Reminiscences

A Description of Circleville, Ohio
(1825-1840)

Also an Account of the
115-year-old sister of
Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry

Published By
DAVID KNOWLTON WEBB
Chillicothe, Ohio

1944

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

All of the material in this book is taken from a scrap book left by the late G. F. Wittich of Circleville and has been edited with the help of corrections made by Mr. Wittich in his annotations.

CIRCLEVILLE

AN OLD CITIZEN WRITES UP THE PAST

And Revels In Thoughts Of Old Time Situations

Banning, Cal., Oct. 3d, 1887.

Editor Union-Herald:—Fifty years ago this night I landed from the canal boat, Circleville, Captain, John H. Sunderman at the foot of Main street, with my father's family, and were taken to old National House then kept by Mr. Darst, the father of Mrs. Henry M. Hedges, Sr.

The circle was then complete, and nearly all the business was done in it, Jacob Lutz and Messrs. Gregg and Wolfley had moved on Main street the winter before. In going up Main street from the canal, we passed Samuel Briner's grocery and bakery, on the corner canal and Main, then the McArthur block, which was just up

to the second story, then came Lutz's store, in the room now occupied by Lynch & Son, then Gregg and Wolfley, Wm. and Hugh Bell, Wm. J. Pyle, M. S. Butler and Israel Gregg and Lenant, all in the block then known as commercial row, the next was the Market House, where Messrs. Clark, Steele, and Jones block now stands, I do not recollect what was on the site where the next block stands. The next house that I remember was Mr. Jacob Leiby (saddler), a two story frame, where the Second National Bank now stands; the upstairs he occupied as a workshop, and the lower room as a salesroom, and justice of peace office, adjoining that was another two story frame, occupied by Major Bright and Capt. S. Swindell as a tin shop, from then on to the Circle was a row of wooden buildings, two of them are still remaining, those occupied by T. J. Epps and Caddy Miller, on the corner of Main and the Circle, was a one story frame grocery, kept by William Hamilton, next to him on the Circle going south, was John Hedges' cabinet shop next to him, and cornered on Bastile Avenue was a two story frame house, one half occupied by Isaac Darst as a store, and the other half as a dwelling. The next house was Dick Jenkins' saloon

(in '42 and '43 used by Mr. French as a girls' seminary; in 1844 Wittich's confectionery), the next was a little one story frame, occupied by Henry Sage as jeweler and watch maker, then came Thomas Moore's grocery, the Masonic Temple, now occupies the ground. After crossing South Main street, the only business houses I recollect between that and the Avenue was Samuel Diffenderfer's grocery, then came the Avenue leading to the old stone jail. On the east side of this Avenue were the county offices, and where the elections were held. On the corner of East Main and the Circle, was a drug store, I believe kept by Dr. E. B. Olds, the Star Saloon now occupies the site. On the opposite corner was the old Circleville House kept by Jacob Gossler, a part of the old tavern is now occupied by James Harsha as a Marble shop. As the old man was a very clever and social Dutchman (German), and had two very nice girls and kept an excellent table he was well patronized by the young men. The next building was Matthew McCrea's dwelling, a two story frame on the corner of the Avenue leading to the old Academy building, and the old Methodist church, which afterwards burned down. On the opposite corner was a frame

building, occupied by the Widow Jackson and three Bell girls, one of them married William Entrekin, and is still living, another one married a Presbyterian minister, by the name of Wells, the other I do not know whom she married nor do I know whether they are living or not. The next was a two story frame, one part occupied by Francis Kinnear, as a dwelling, and the room on the corner of North Main street as a store; in the rear and fronting on North Main street was the residence of old Joseph Johnson; immediately north was a tavern kept by Gen. John E. Morgan, the site now occupied by Wm. Bauder's carriage shop. On the North West corner of North Main and the Circle, stood an old yellow frame building then occupied by Matt Whitesell as a grocery. I cannot call to mind now who occupied the premises from there to the Avenue. On the west corner of the avenue, was the two story brick residence of Samuel Rodgers, and adjoining was the store of Rodgers and Martin. In the rear of the store, and fronting on the Avenue, was an old red frame building occupied by Rock & Rutter as a tailor shop, Mr. Rutter is still living and occupies the same house on Scioto street that he did when we first came to Circle-

ville. Next was the store room of Renick & Hurst, it fronted on the circle, and in squaring that quarter of the town it was turned around to front on West Main street, and is the same building now occupied by Joseph Richardson. On the corner was the store room of Joseph Johnson, a one story frame, which was also turned around on Main street. I have now completed the Circle, and the only brick buildings on the north side of Main street was the grocery of Harvey and Samuel Littler, now occupied by Snyder. The building now occupied by the Union-Herald office, was a store kept by Z. R. Martin and Henry Sunderman. The next was a building occupied as the bank of Circleville, Hoel Lawrence, President, and Mr. Gillette Cashier, and I am glad to know that Mrs. Gillette is still living, and remarkably active for one of her age. Adjoining the bank on the east, was the harness and sadler shop of John A. Wolfley; the next was a two story brick building occupied by Geo. E. Wolfley as a dwelling now turned into a hotel, and on the canal was the large brick ware-house belonging to Rogers & Martin. The block which is Benford's hardware store, was built in the summer of 1838, and when finished

Rogers & Martin and Renick & Hurst moved from the circle into it, the former parties occupying the corner room, and the other the room east; I do not now remember who occupied the east room.

The old circular embankment was perfect then except where the streets crossed it, which were cut down. The old square fortification was nearly whole, and a part of it was used annually by the Militia as muster grounds. South of that, and what was familiarly known as "Darlin's" lake were corn fields farmed by John O'Day, who lived in a log cabin, somewhere near the residence of Mrs. William McCrum. I recollect going to his house once to buy some corn, and he gave me three half bushels of ears for a bushel. I thought he was cheating himself, but I found out different afterwards.

There was not a turnpike in the county, the Maysville and Zanesville, was not built for three years after; there was no bridge across the Scioto then, although there had previously been a floating bridge, all the crossing was done in a ferry boat just above the aqueduct kept by a old man by the name of Richardson. The piers of the old bridge that was burned a few years

ago were laid the summer before we came and the wood work the same fall and winter. The contractor was a Mr. Day. I believe he was from New York and report said he lost money on the contract, but I am certain there never was a better bridge erected in the State, and if it had not burned it would have lasted for fifty years longer. At that date there was not a railroad in Ohio, all the produce was shipped by canal, and all the goods were brought here by the canal or by wagon. All the traveling was done by stage. It took two days and night to go from Columbus to Cleveland, and then often the passengers had to get out and pry the stage out of the mud. After the National road was built, our merchants went East by that route, goods were generally sent by rail to Cumberland, and from thence to Wheeling by wagon; if there was plenty of water in the Ohio river, they were put on a steamboat to Portsmouth and from thence to Circleville by canal. If the Ohio river was low they usually wheeled them clear through. I recollect one spring D. Peirce, the veteran merchant had his goods wagoned from Cumberland, one wagon carried ninety-six hundred pounds. It was a large Conestoga wagon, four inch

tire, six horses, bells on each horse, driven by a single line, and the driver rode the off horse, and when the wagon was backed up to the pavement in front of his store, the team reached across the street. The merchants carried everything, hardware, glassware, queensware, earthenware, boots and shoes, hats and caps, groceries and liquors. It was a very common thing but it was thought no disgrace then to get drunk, everybody drank, and if you went to a farmer's house, the first thing he would do, would be to hand out the bottle, and if you did not take some he would consider it an insult. Whisky was cheap. I have sold many a barrel, when they were building the Washington turnpike, of Dick Ward's fine corn juice for five dollars, and used to retail M. and A. M. Ashbrook's best rectified fine whisky and not doctored for twenty cents per gallon. Money was very scarce and not much in circulation, and what was in circulation was paper money. There were plenty of banks throughout the state which issued their paper freely, and their standing was not the best. Most all the business was done by trading. If any body wanted to go to house-keeping, the merchant would give them orders to the furniture store, to the

stove and tin shop, or if he wanted a saddle or a set of harness, the merchant would send a clerk or an order and get them and the manufactors would pay his employees by giving them orders on the store. Every thing in the produce line, or every thing that the farmer manufactured was very low, and as he could not sell it for cash he had to trade it out. I have bought wheat when I was with Doddridge & Co. at forty and fifty cents per bushel, corn at twelve and a half cents, oats ten cents. Good fat hogs would only bring two and a half cents per pound dressed, and one season Messrs. Gregg and Wolfley packed pork at that price, shipped it to New York via New Orleans, and lost money on it. Could buy good beef at three cents per pound, chickens seventy-five cents per dozen, turkies from twenty-five to thirty cents each, butter in the summer six and a quarter cents, eggs two to three cents a dozen, and I have seen barrels carted away and dumped in the bottoms, could not sell them and they spoiled on their hands. I remember Doddridge and Co. shipping thirty barrels of dried apples to Cleveland, which they only paid thirty-seven cents per bushel for and when they got return of sales they did not realize

first cost. Common homemade blue jeans brought fifty cents per yard in trade, linsy twenty-five cents, plaid flannels fifty cents, homemade linen thirty to forty cents. Wages were exceedingly low; good mechanics got from one dollar to a dollar and a quarter per day, and common laborers from fifty to sixty-five cents, while farm hands were working for eight to twelve dollars per month and board, and they did not stop at ten hours for a days work either, nor did they go to town every Saturday afternoon, as most of them do now. The farmer boys all wore homespun, staid at home, and worked for the best interest of his employees, but what a change has taken place in the last half century. Now, he must wear the best of store clothes, have a horse and often a buggy, and come to town every Saturday afternoon; in fact I have known young America plowing in twelve dollar doeskin pants and ten dollar boots.

There was not a bookstore in town. I had to go to Chillicothe to get my school books. The first bookstore was opened by William McAthur, on the corner, in a one story frame house, now covered by the Odd Fellows block. The first regular hardware store was opened by Samuel Mar-

field in the room adjoining the Third National Bank. The squaring of the circle was commenced by Dr. E. B. Olds in 1839 by erecting the large three story brick known as the Olds block; the corner room was completed early in the year of 1840, and occupied by Olds and Baker as a dry goods store. I do not now remember who did the excavations, but Dick Wilson and Joe Carr did the stone work, W. C. Joseph and Jacob Taylor did the brick work and Stanly Cook and Sons did the wood work. That fall was the great campaign when Harrison ran against Van Buren for president. Dr. Olds being a strong Democrat, and believing that Van Buren would be elected he offered to sell, and did sell, quite an amount of goods, at double price if Van Buren was elected or nothing if Harrison was elected. The result was that he supplied a good many Whigs with dry goods for nothing. I shall never forget the exciting times during that campaign. The political meetings were immense, with their long processions. Everybody seemed to be fully aroused and excited and to see the log cabins, coonskins, strings of buck-

eyes, and hard cider, was wonderful. On one occasion I remember of seeing a very large wagon made for the express purpose, filled with men, drawn by thirty-six yoke of oxen. General Harrison came here one evening, the people built a temporary platform around the sign post that stood in front of the ("Ohio House" I think it was called then) and he made a speech from it. During that season we had some of the most able and talented speakers in the state, such as Thomas Ewing Sen., the old salt boiler, Thomas Corwin the waggoner boy, Henry Stansbury and others. The meetings were generally held in the woods, which is now built up and known as Briar-town. The evening meetings were held in the old court house which was not torn down till the next year (1841). The south-east quarter of the Circle was next squared by Olds and Cradlebaugh, and a row of one story frame buildings were erected on Main street. Two of them are still standing one occupied by Acker King and the barber shop next to it. On the grounds now occupied by the Wagner block the Old School Presbyterians erected a frame church, which was moved over to the north-east quarter of the Circle and now occupied by Ensworth & Brunner as a

hardware store. The north-east quarter was next squared by the same parties. The south-west quarter was to be squared, but was not for several years afterwards, by W. W. Beirce. In this quarter was "Bastile Avenue." It was the most popular Avenue in town. and the most populous. A short reminiscence of one of its residents by "Lex" was published a few weeks ago in your paper, which was perfectly familiar to me, as we lived on the Avenue, and scarcely a stone's throw from the place. The first residence on the Avenue was Isaac Darst, which was sold to John Conn and moved on Mound street opposite Mrs. Dr. Stribling's house. On the rear end of the same lot, was a story and a half frame, formerly used by Darst as a warehouse, afterwards converted into a dwelling, and my recollection is that Dr. Terry and wife were the first to occupy it. Afterward S. D. Turney lived in it. In squaring that quarter it was moved to Franklin street, and now owned by the Lonsberry heirs. Directly opposite was the residence of Dick Jenkins, who died there and whose widow married George Dalton, and who a short time afterward moved to southern California near Los Angeles. When I came to California near-

ly three years ago, I went out to see the old gentleman, and found him hale and hearty, and very spry for one over eighty years of age. His wife had died the year before. Mr. Isaac Myers (who is a brother to Mrs. Dalton) and his wife both formerly lived in Circleville, are keeping house for him. He seemed quite pleased to see me, and inquired very particularly about his old acquaintances in Circleville. He has about fifty acres in orange trees, and is quite wealthy. Next to that was a one story frame. I do not recollect who lived in it when we came here, but it was where Doctor Griswold and wife went to house keeping after they moved to Circleville. On the other side of the Avenue was a one story frame used by George Gephart as a tailor shop, until Mr. Diffenderler built his store on West Main, when he moved into the second story of that. After the General moved, the room was occupied by James Civils and John Butler, as a paint shop. Mrs. Butler is still living at Circleville. On the same lot farther west was the two story residence of George Gephart. now owned and occupied by Mrs. Alice D. Hawkes. General Gephart raised a large family, and moved west many years ago, and lived to be quite old, and has only

been dead a few years. Next to this on the west was the one story brick cottage of Dr. Gibson, the residence of the belles of Bastile Avenue mentioned by your correspondent "Lex," who is mistaken, when he said the Doctor left two children. He left three, Hannah, Susan and George. Hannah married a Mr. Stiner. Susan married Peter Bohn, George died quite young, was about eleven or twelve years old, from white swelling of the knee.

Opposite Gen. Gephart's lived Colonel Henry Sage in a two story frame. He also had a large family. My impression is that the children are all dead except the youngest boy Harleigh, who is living at Dayton. The youngest daughter married a Mr. Cherry who died. She afterwards married a Doctor Sharp, who became notorious for his fighting proclivities during the late war, but always backed down whenever anybody wanted to fight him. They moved from Circleville and I don't know whether she is living or not. Next was the residence of Dr. Wm. N. Luckey and wife, a more generous, clever whole-souled couple never lived in Circleville. Aunt Lucky was the personification of generosity and goodness, as every one that lived by her could testify. They never

had any children. One peculiarity the Dr. had, you could never get him to go on the ice, no difference how thick it was, he said it had no joist underneath.

The next building was the Lutheran church, which stood back a little of the present church. The pastor was Joseph A. Roof. Although he left Circleville quite a number of years ago, I believe he is still living. There never was a preacher in Circleville that was more highly esteemed by everybody than he. He was very generous to the poor, although his salary was small. He did a great deal of good during the cholera season of 1850. He was on the board of health. He was one of the most active men on the board; he was taking care of the sick, helping bury the dead, and urging the living to prepare for death. He was one of the most useful ministers Circleville ever had. Opposite the church was a one story frame, occupied by Abram, Emanuel, John and David Gephart, four brothers, as a carpenter shop. Emanuel is the only one of them now living in Circleville, and I think the others are dead, cannot say positively. The next residence was that of George W. Downs, a man universally known throughout the county. He had

some very peculiar traits, was rather rough in his language, but had a heart in him as big as an ox, a more liberal and generous man could not be found anywhere; the latch string always hung outside, and he never turned any away if they needed help, I speak from personal knowledge, for we lived beside him for several years. He was a hatter by trade and had a shop on the public grounds in the rear of the market house, his hats were very heavy and durable, and have heard of them lasting as long as seven years. On the other side of the Avenue next to the church was Jacob F. Mader's grocery and bakery. The house was built on the side of the Mount Gilboa the basement being used as a bakery, while the upper rooms were used as a grocery and dwelling. He moved to Chillicothe and lived there quite a number of years, but moved back to Circleville. where he is now living, a very hale, hearty old man. The next house was owned and built by Henry Sunderman, into which we moved when we came to Circleville; it was a one and a half story frame, and in squaring that quarter, it was moved around to front on Mound street, and is still standing. There were no other houses for several years. At that time Mount Gilboa was almost complete.

A road had been cut through it, the old Episcopal church was built on the mound on the south side of the road on the same grounds of the present church building, but at a greater elevation; the floor of the old building would be as high as the roof of the present one. The north part of the mound was a great place for bonfires and holding rejoicings success of elections etc.

I recollect on one occasion the Democrats had achieved a victory and they were having a big demonstration on the mound. They were all pretty full, and felt happy, when one Wm. Strevay got too near the edge of the bank and fell off, down to the road. They thought he was killed, when old Anthony Bowsher hollowed out "cover him up, cover him up so these d—d Whigs won't find him." It happened that the man was not hurt at all. There was no foundry then, all the plows and castings sold here were brought from Columbus. In the year 1838 my father entered into partnership with Isaac Darst and they put up a foundry on the land belonging to Mr. Darst nearly on the site where the Gas works stands. It was literally a one horse concern, for the power was produced by a large bay horse walking on a large horizontal wheel. It was quite a novelty to all

the young folks and a large number of the older people, who used to come down there by the score every time they took a cast. It was sold after the death of Mr. Darst to Judge Beirce, who had it removed to the old Cradlebaugh tavern stand where, it has remained ever since, and is now known as the "Scioto Machine works." There was another foundry started by a Mr. Jones on the south side of the canal near the aqueduct, but it soon fizzled out. There were three furniture shops, John Hedges, Solomon Hedges and Michael Pontious, two chair shops, Mathias Myers and Emmet & McLain, the last named did all their turning by dog power, two large and heavy dogs travelling in a large wheel about thirty feet in diameter. There was also a wood turning shop owned by Jonathan Moore, on the race from the mill near the aqueduct. There were two carding machines, one over the turning shop just mentioned and one just above Groce's slaughter house, run by Jacob Deffenbaugh, who also had a saw mill in connection with it, was turned by water from Hargus creek. There was also a saw mill on the same creek near where Pickaway street crosses the creek, and another on the basin close by the old Doddridge mill.

The canal did a large business, as it was the only way to get rid of the surplus corn, wheat, flour, pork and lard. During the dry summer and fall of 1841 all the country mills were stopped on account of the creek drying up, and the farmers from Clinton, Fayette, Madison and part of Highland counties used to come here to get their wheat ground, and have known them to wait three days for their grist, and have seen as many as fifty wagons camped out near the mill at one time. There were three tannerys, James Bell's near the Academy, Robert Hayes on the street between George Gearhart and Daniel Demuth, and Andrew Cradlebaugh's on the lot owned by the Scioto Machine works. There were three cooper shops, James Sapp and George Burgett's on Water alley, and a very large one on mill race, run exclusively on flour barrels for the mill, carried on by William and John Maiden. There was only one flouring mill, owned by J. D. Doddridge and turned out one hundred barrels every twenty-four hours, and which is still standing.

Now after saying so much about the town let me say a word of the inhabitants at that time. There is barely a dozen persons who were men grown that are living

there now. All I can call to mind are Samuel A. Moore, Jerome Wolfley. George Gearhart, Jacob Rutter, Michael Pontious, George Pontious, Acker King, Benjamin Myers, Bentley Groce, Emanuel Gephart, Jacob F. Mader and Joseph Richardson. There are a few others that are living but have moved away, J. G. Doddridge, Hugh Bell, Daniel Pontious, Harvey Johns and Joseph A. Roof. There may be others but I cannot call them to mind.

There is not a single man in business now, that was doing business when we came to Circleville. D. Pierce, the oldest in business, came the next year after, as did Samuel Ruggles.

In the summer of 1840 I attended a select school (there was no free school then) in the Academy, and out of a school of forty boys there are but four of them still living, George Doane, of Omaha; W. K. Rodgers, of Columbus; William McCrea, of Illinois, and the writer, and the time will not be long when we too will be numbered with many that have gone on before.

There is a great deal more I could say about Circleville. but as I have already spun my letter out to such a great length I will stop, and perhaps at some future time I may say something more. Read my

communication of "Lex" published in your paper, the letter of Jas. Haswell, of Kentucky, a Circleville boy, and later still the letter of J. D. Doddridge, who formerly lived in Circleville, incited within me a desire to write what I remembered about Circleville fifty years ago. These things will not be new to many of the old inhabitants, but may be interesting to the young generation that are growing up.

Yours Respectfully,

W. H. Yerington.

Circleville Daily Press, Oct. 16, 1885.

SIXTY YEARS AGO

Reminiscences Of The Circleville Boys At That Time

Appearance Of The City And Surroundings

Sixty years ago the east corporation line was the alley between the dwellings of Mack Parrett and Henry Pfennig, then called a lane.

Then the quarter-mile race-track was from this line east through the farm of Samuel Watt, the farm house being the house in which George H. Fickhardt now lives. and the termination of the quarter mile track was opposite the McCrea property. At the termination of every race the regular fist fights took place, as then about every other man wanted to be counted a bully. There were at that time regular training days for the militia which comprised all men between the ages of 18 and 45. The training day for com-

panies was the first Friday in September of each year, and the general musters were on the Monday following, when all the companies of the county came to town to muster, the arms being generally corn-stalks. It was a great time for us boys, as there were plenty of fist fights, keeping the boys running from one side of the circle to the other to witness the fights.

In those days every family raised their own hogs for their meat, the hogs being slaughtered in their own yards, in winter, neighbors helping neighbors. The hogs were cut and sausages made in the evening, and generally all cleaned up in one day. Numbers of families also kept a flock of sheep running at large over the then open country. The sheep were sheared in the spring the wool washed, picked and carded by hand, and spun on the big spinning wheel, and woven into cloth on hand looms for winter clothing for both men and women. Wool picking was done by inviting the women to spend the evening, which took the place of the party of to-day. Refreshments or a regular supper of flannel cakes, stewed chicken, store coffee, store tea, warm ginger cakes, &c., were served. No angel food or pound cakes were to be found in those times. Flax was

also raised by numbers of citizens of the town, who had their flax pullings. When ripe the flax was hauled in, and when the husks were sufficiently rotted, broken on a regular flax brake. It was then hackled on long iron prongs set in a piece of wood, put up in bunches and spun on the small wheel and afterwards woven into cloth for summer wear for men and women.

There were at that time two spinning wheels in the town, one owned by Isaac Warren, and the other by Mathias Myers, grandfather of Allen O. Myers, the statesman.

For hats for men and boys we depended on the hat manufactories of the town. We had fur hats for the men and wool for the boys. The measure of the head was taken and we waited for the hat to be made. For shoes (no boots in those times), the leather owned by the head of the family was taken to the shoe shop, where each member of the family, boys and girls alike, went to have their feet measured to have shoes made for the winter. No shoes were worn in summer by boys particularly; usually only the girls had shoes in summer.

Clothing, such as it was, was also made at home. There were no clothing stores, no hat stores, no shoe stores, no stores to

sell groceries exclusively, no queensware stores, no furniture stores, no stores for hardware exclusively. The so-called stores then kept groceries, queensware, and a general assortment of goods with usually a bottle of whiskey on the counter for such customers that wished to help themselves.

There was more manufacturing in Circleville then than now. Shoes, hats, clothing and furniture were all manufactured here, and we had a nail factory here then.

Wagons were sent to Zanesville for loads of salt to be distributed through town and country. All dry goods and articles brought from the east were hauled over the mountains in large wagons drawn by six large horses, which were generally provided with bells. There were no railroads anywhere in this country at that day. No cooking stoves in those days. In their place were the large fire places in the kitchen with cranes for pots, and the tin reflector to set before the fire to bake bread. Wood only was used for heating purposes and cooking, the fire being covered at night to be rekindled in the morning, and if the fire went out some one was sent to the neighbors for a coal. Failing in this, the steel and flint to strike a fire were resorted to. We had no matches in those days.

The culinary department of a household was not then as now. No fruit was put up in cans in their season, but fruits of all kinds were dried and preserved. Tomatoes were not known as an article of food, but were known as Jerusalem apples and were set on mantle-pieces as ornaments only.

The schools of those times would not at all compare with those of the present day. For school books we had Webster's spelling book, Murray's grammar, Smiley & Pike's arithmetic, Olney's geography, and the Bible and New Testament were used as readers. For books to read at home by the fireside in winter we had Scottish Chiefs, Thaddeus of Warsaw, Children of the Abbey, Alonzo and Molise. Charlotte Temple, Robinson Crusoe, Lives of Washington and Marion, &c. We had no newspapers, except the one printed in Circleville, a small weekly sheet by the name of the Olive Branch, the grandfather of the Union-Herald and Daily Press.

We had no gas or coal oil for lights in those days, but instead we used the candle dips, which each family made for itself, just as they made their own soap for washing. Laborers received fifty cents per day in those times, and worked from sunrise

to sundown; no talk about eight hours for a day's work. By the month they got seven or eight dollars per month and board. Female help was then seventy-five cents per week.

As store coffee was then high, and but little money was to be had, rye coffee was used through the week, and store coffee Sunday morning.

The boys then had no glass or stone marbles to play with, but instead we would go to the brick yard, make mud marbles, and have them burned like bricks.

For currency there were six and a fourth cent pieces, called fips, twelve and a half cent pieces, called nine pence, and quarter, half, and whole dollars. We had no five or ten cent pieces. Money of all kinds was so scarce that a half dollar looked to almost any one as large as a cart-wheel. In those days a large part of the mechanics of the town would go to the country in harvest time to help the farmers reap their wheat. as nothing but sickles were used for cutting. We had no wheat cradles and no reapers and binders in those days. Fifty cents per day was paid for a day's work, for a full hand, twenty-five for a half hand. The writer then made a half hand, coming home from a full week's

work Saturday evening with six bright quarter dollars jingling in his pocket.

We had no buggies or carriages, no livery stables. We all went horse back or in common road wagons. On Christmas our stocking was hung up with the prongs of a fork and filled with gingerbread, mint candy and nuts. An occasional concert was given with such songs as Pretty Polly Hopkins, How do You do. My Long-tailed Blue, Jim Crow, Coal Black Rose, Barbara Allen, etc. Men worth from five to ten thousand dollars were considered very wealthy, and a family with an income of two to three hundred dollars per year well to do.

There were no high-priced undertakers in those days. Coffins for an adult person cost from five to eight dollars. There were no hearses. The coffin was carried on a bier borne by the pall-bearers to the village grave yard. There were no envelopes for letters. The paper was folded and sealed with wax. We had no steel or gold pens. We used the goose quill for pens. We had no blotting paper, but black sand for blotting.

We had what we then regarded as comfortable houses, but not elegant or costly

ones. Plumbing was an unknown art. We had no water or gas-pipes in our walls, no water closets in our houses, no fixed bathtubs, and no door-bells.

Boys were modest, girls virtuous, and old age respected in those days. Finally things in general were not then as now.

From Daily Evening Herald, April 14, 1885.

Oldest Woman Living!

Once A Resident Of Circleville

The Lafayette, Ind., correspondent of the Cincinnati Enquirer says that there arrived in that city on Wednesday evening, Mrs. Mary Beneman, from Ames, Iowa; Mrs. Beneman is 112 years old, she having been born at Lewiston, Delaware, March 14, 1773.

The aged lady is the guest of relatives in Lafayette. The correspondent says; "Mrs. Beneman's maiden name was Mary Perry, as is gleaned from her relatives. She is a daughter of Captain Christopher R. Perry of Revolutionary fame, and sister of Commodore Oliver Perry, one of our noted naval commanders. Another brother was Matthew Colbreth Perry, who framed the treaty with Japan.

“On arrival at womanhood Miss Perry married Wm. Colter. In 1806, with their two sons, they started for Circleville, Ohio. Their journey was long and tedious, but they arrived there and began farming. Four sons were born to them. Three still living—Peter Colter, who resides at Rensselaer, this State, aged eighty-one years, and Charles and James Colter, living at Booneville, Mo. Taken altogether, it is said she now has 120 children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren living. At Circleville Mr. Colter died, and Mrs. C. afterward became Mrs. John Beneman. He lived but a short time.

“Of Circleville, and their trip to Ohio, the old lady says they started with a horse and wagon, but the horse died about sixty miles from Circleville. They put the two children in a wheelbarrow and wheeled them to Circleville. At that time there was but one house there and that was a log cabin. The Indians did not trouble them there, but the wolves and wildcats were very numerous, and they had to nightly encircle their house with fire.

“Asked if she had ever seen General Washington, she answered: ‘Oh, yes; I have seen him, and remember him very

well. He was tall and fine looking, and was a great friend of my father. He has been where we lived, and everybody turned out to see and shake hands with him.

“Brother Oliver, she said, was a sailor, and he had been to sea a good many times. Once they were from home when his ship came in and he had only time to write his name in chalk on the door of the house. She never saw him again. Soon after his ship was wrecked, and the family heard he was drowned. It was after she went to Ohio that she heard that Oliver was saved and was a great officer.”

Of the aged lady's appearance the correspondent says; “Her form much bent with age, was clad in black and wrapped in a heavy shawl, her head partly hidden in a snowy cap of the old style of architecture. The face, elongated by age, is traversed by countless wrinkles and of a sallow yellow hue. Her mouth is sunken, and her lips tightly drawn and puckered. Her brows are heavily overhanging, and from beneath them gleam eyes that are still sharp and bright. The face remains an expression of shrewdness, and there are yet evidences of a powerful mind. A few locks of hair as thick, white and soft as

wool, were visible beneath the cap, and Mrs. B. said that about two decades ago a new growth of hair came out, and so vigorously did it grow that repeated cuttings were necessary.

NOTE — Mrs. Beneman is reputed to have lived to the age of one hundred and fifteen years.







