

This is taken from a book published in July 1896 entitled *Memorial to the Pioneer Women of the Western Reserve* which contains write-ups about the female pioneers in townships in the Western Reserve.

Remember, some families are found in more than one city, so be sure to check out all of the city information.

A special "Thanks" goes to Betty Ralph for transcribing this for the site.

# Parma

Parma is one of the youngest townships in Cuyahoga County. In consequence of a prevailing impression that it was a swampy and undesirable region, the early settlers of the County avoided this section. The center of the township lies about eight miles south of the Public Square in Cleveland. The township is bounded north by Brooklyn, east by Independence, south by Royalton and west by Middleburg. It is an agricultural community and contains no village. Fully three-fourths of the population are Germans.

The first settlement in the township was made in 1818 by Benjamin FAY, Sr., a native of Massachusetts. He came from Lewis County, N.Y., with his wife, Ruth WILCOX, his daughters Amanda, Harriet, Huldah, Sophia and Mary, and five sons. A daughter, Mabel FAY, was born to them in 1810. She was the first white child born in Parma.

Mr. FAY and family came by ox team from their home in New York. From South Brooklyn they had to cut a road through the woods in order to reach their farm. In 1819 Mr. FAY opened a tavern in a double log house, known as "B. FAY' Inn." This was a noted landmark for many years.

Conrad COUNTRYMAN, a Mowhawk Dutchman, accompanied by his wife and three sons, young men, reached Parma about the same time Mr. FAY did. They took up the farm afterwards owned by Moses TOWL. In 1821 Mr. COUNTRYMAN erected on the banks of the Stony Creek the first saw mill built in the township. In this mill, a few years later, his little granddaughter, Lucy COUNTRYMAN, was accidentally killed. Mr. COUNTRYMAN also built the first blacksmith shop in the township.

Hezekiah CLARK and his wife, and Captain STONEBRUNNER settled on farms near Conrad COUNTRYMAN's, in 1818, but the soon moved to Cleveland.

Pelathia BLISS, an enterprising young man, carrying his pack on his back, started on foot from his home in Connecticut, seeking his fortune. He arrived in Parma in 1818, and was so pleased with the location that he built himself a cabin near Mr. COUNTRYMAN's, and at once began clearing a farm. He had left behind him, in Windsor, Connecticut, a bright eyed, intelligent young woman, who had promised to join him when he had found a home. In 1820

he returned and Lucina GRANT became Mrs. BLISS. The wedding journey was taken in 1821, in a wagon that brought Mr. FOOT and family to Brooklyn, and the couple were soon settled in their Parma home. A daughter, Nancy, came to gladden their home in 1823. She is now Mrs. Proctor PEARSE, of Bloomingdale, Michigan.

In 1820, two hardy and intelligent young men, Asher NORTON and Benjamin NORTON, came from Rutland, Vermont, and took up adjoining farms on the Independence line road. With Asher NORTON came his wife, Ruth HARRIS, and their daughters Mary C., Azuba A., Sophia and Emily R. Benjamin NORTON was accompanied by his wife, Betsey MINER, his daughters Phebe, Jane, Permelia, and two sons. For four years these families were alone in that quarter of the township. Then a brother-in-law, Rufus SCOVILLE, together with his wife, Roxy NORTON and daughter Clara joined them. Mrs. SCOVILLE had four sons.

The children of these families were obliged to attend school in Brecksville as until 1832 there was no school in that part of Parma. In 1826 Nehemiah TOMS and wife Sally MINER, a sister of Mrs. Benjamin NORTON, joined the east Parma settlement.

There were no further additions to this colony until 1831, when Bela NORTON and wife Eliza HOPKINS, their daughter Marcia came, also Joel NORTON and wife Annie DANIELS, with their daughters Roxy, Mary, Fanny, Betsey and Clarissa. Thus it will be seen that to the State of Vermont, and to the NORTON family, belongs the honor of having settled the Eastern part of the township. How isolated and lonely must have been the condition of these mothers and daughters, coming as they did from the intelligence and advantages of their New England homes!

In October, 1821, the little company of pioneers in the Western part, or what was afterwards known as the Cleveland and Columbus road, was increased by the arrival of five families. They were those of Asa EMERSON, Amos HODGMAN, Joseph SMALL, William STEEL and Jesse NICHOLAS; Mrs. Sally SMALL EMERSON and Mrs. Thankful SMALL HODGMAN were cousins of Joseph SMALL. Mrs. STEEL was a niece of theirs, and Mr. NICHOLAS was a relative of all.

They had been neighbors in the town of Bowdoine, Maine. Together they had journeyed with ox teams and horses to Wheeling, West Virginia. After spending a year there, and another year near Cincinnati, their hearts had turned with irresistible longing to the old home in Maine. They started on the return journey.

On reaching Parma, however, they concluded to locate there. Log houses were soon erected and preparations made for the approaching winter. What tongue can tell of the hardships and inconvenience suffered by these women on this long journey from Maine to Ohio!

Much of the time, especially over the mountains, the women and children had to go on foot. One of the girls, Sally EMERSON, suffered all through life from having one shoulder higher than the other. This was supposed to have been caused by having been led so much by an older person on this journey. One morning as the caravan was about to move, it was found that the baby in the Emerson family was missing. At last he was found, nearly smothered

under a feather bed, which had been accidentally thrown over him. That boy is now Mr. Taylor EMERSON, of Cleveland, the only survivor of the EMERSON family.

Lucinda B. EMERSON was the second white child born in the township, March, 1822. Dr. Henry HUDSON, of Royalton, was called to attend Mrs. EMERSON at this time. Dr. HUDSON was not only a physician, but an ordained Baptist minister. He was called on Saturday to attend Mrs. EMERSON.

Early the next morning word was sent around for all the settlers to gather at the log cabin of Mrs. HODGMAN, and there, on that spring morning, March 3rd, 1822, the first sermon preached in Parma was delivered by Rev. Henry HUDSON.

In May of that same year occurred the first death in the township. Isaac EMERSON, a young man of 17 years of age, was called from earthly scenes. A grave was made for him on the banks of Stony Creek, near the home of Mr. COUNTRYMAN. In September, Mr. William STEEL was called away from the hardships of pioneer life, and his child soon followed him. Mrs. STEEL, like Naomi of old, being thus left a widow and childless, soon returned on foot and alone to her old home in Maine.

Abner S. BEALS and his wife, Jane SHEPHERD, came from Geneva, N.Y., to Royalton, Ohio, in January, 1821. In the spring of 1825 they removed to Parma. Mr. BEALS was the first settler on the State road in Parma. He first located in the northern part of the township. The children attended school in Brighton, and walked to Sabbath school at Brooklyn Center, a distance of 3 ½ miles. There were many wild animals and rattlesnakes in the township then. One morning, Mr. BEALS went out to shoot a partridge and his little son accompanied him; suddenly Mr. BEALS heard the boy, who was a short distance from him call out "Daddy! See the big hog!" He turned to see a large bear on a direct line between him and his boy. The father's hand trembled so that he dared not fire until the bear had passed the range of the boy. He tracked the bear some distance by the blood from his wound, but lost him amid the rocks of the neighboring brook. At one time, Mrs. BEALS' little daughter, Julia, was going with her sister Eliza to a spring after water. Her kitten followed them and Julia tried to fasten it in a hollow log until she returned. The kitten refused to enter the log and Julia stooped to learn the reason. There she saw a great rattlesnake coiled ready to strike.

To his daughter, Julia, who married Robert HODGMAN and has spent 71 or 73 years of her life in Parma, has fallen the pleasant task of directing these pioneer records.

Mrs. SMALL was a noted housekeeper. Everything about her log house was "neat as wax." The first wedding in the township occurred at her house, when her daughter Lois was married to Ephraim FOWLES, of Middleburgh.

Mr. Samuel FREEMAN and Mrs. Sarah BELKNAP FREEMAN, with their seven daughters and five sons came from Stonebridge, Massachusetts, to seek a home in the West. They came via Erie Canal and Lake Erie, and after a journey of 20 days, reached "B. Fay's Inn," Saturday night, May 26th, 1825.

Mr. FAY had an unoccupied barn, and on Monday morning the FREEMAN family took possession of it. A fireplace was built at one side of the empty mow. The mother and

daughters turned the stable into a sleeping apartment. The father and sons took possession of the loft, and the barn floor served as a dining room. Here the family lived for forty days, until a house had been erected for them on the farm that has ever since been known as "the FREEMAN place." Mr. FREEMAN was a man of education and culture. No family did more toward building up the religious and educational interests of the community. The first school in Parma was taught by Mr. FREEMAN in his own house. He was the first postmaster of the township, and held many offices of trust in church and township. Mrs. FREEMAN was a fitting wife for such a husband. Nearly all her daughters and sons became teachers in the public schools, and earnest workers in the church. Selemda FREEMAN married Reuben EMERSON and is still living, in Lakeland, Minnesota. Lois FREEMAN became Mrs. Asa EMERSON and yet lives amid the scenes of her girlhood in Parma.

Thomas ADAMS and wife settled across the road from where Mrs. Fanny INGERSOLL now resides. He was a blacksmith. His brother, David ADAMS and wife, Buelah PRINCE, purchased a part of what afterward became the John A. ACKLEY farm. These brothers came from South Amherst, Mass. In 1825.

There was a lull in the settlement of the township from 1825 to 1830. In the spring of 1829, Daniel NICHOLS and wife, Sibly, with their daughter Betsey and sons, Charles and Joseph, came from Bowdoine, Maine. William GORDON settled on the center road near the Royalton line in 1829. He was the first white settler on the Center road. His wife, Sarah SHEPHERD, came to Royalton from Geneva, N.Y., in 1821. Mrs. GORDON was of a happy, cheerful disposition, well fitted to find comfort in the midst of the hardships of a new country.

In December, 1829, according to the report of the school enumerator, there were but 24 house holders in the township. During the years 1831 - 1834 inclusive, Parma was rapidly settled. The most of the farms were taken up during those years. Many of these settlers came from the State of New York, indeed, one road was named "York Street," because of this.

In 1832, John J. BIGELOW, of Richfield, made the brick for B. FAY's new inn. Mr. BIGELOW was so pleased with the land on the Center road, that when his contract was completed, he purchased 200 acres, paying for it the sum of \$500.

In the spring of 1833 he came with his wife, Phila HUMPHREY, and took possession of a little house which had been erected by a man who had "slashed" five acres of land for Mr. BIGELOW. Phila HUMPHREY was born and reared in Goshen, Connecticut. From the "land of steady habits" and refinement, she came to Richfield, and thence to her Parma home. There was no floor in that home. The fire-place consisted of a flat stone for a hearth and another stone for a back. From these a chimney was built of sticks and plastered with clay.

In anticipation of the arrival of a sister from Connecticut, Mrs. BIGELOW fitted up a room. It was a shed built against the log house. It could be reached only from the outside, as there was no door between the two rooms. This room Mrs. BIGELOW floored with "culls" or staves that had been rejected as unfit for market. In this room, Fanny HUMPHREY, afterwards Mrs. Cyrus INGERSOLL, spent her first night in Parma. Yet this home was the beginning of a beautiful home in which were reared two refined and cultivated daughters, both of whom were successful school teachers. They were Celia, now Mrs. George

DEMINGS, of Cleveland, and Ellen, afterward Mrs. Dr. DANIELS, of Townsend Ohio, now deceased.

Mrs. James BROWN, Sr., nee Silence PETTEE, was born in Claremont, Massachusetts, 1782. Her father was a commissioned officer in the Revolutionary Army. He was, I think, of Huguenot extraction, and his daughter inherited a large portion of the sturdy independence and force of character which fitted her for pioneer life. She came to Parma in 1833 with her husband and four children.

Here a log house, containing one room, was built, and here she spent most of the remaining years of her life. She was an expert spinner and weaver. People came from Royalton, Brooklyn, and Middleburgh, bringing material for "tow and linen" cloth, to be used for table cloths, towels, bed ticks and aprons; wool for sheets, underclothing, dresses for women and girls, and satinet for the men and boys.

The coloring was done with the bark from the oak, hickory, chestnut, maple and butternut. Sometime the wool from black sheep was mixed with that from white, making "sheeps' grey" which was durable if not handsome.

She was paid 6 ¼ cents per yard for weaving plain cloth, and 10 cents per yard for "kersey" and "satinet." In the midst of the labor necessary to the making a home in the wilderness, she found time to cultivate flowers. A sunny spot was set apart for poppies, great golden crowned marigolds, spicy grass pinks, hollyhocks, where bumble bees reveled, and powered themselves with yellow pollen, and one queenly damask rose. Down in a far corner was the chamomile bed, whose aromatic blossoms made into a pillow, were supposed to be a sovereign balm for insomnia, and many other ills. There, too, grew dill and horehound, wormwood, mint and anise.

Mrs. BROWN was a woman of strong convictions, and they were impressed upon the character of her sons. She was one of the earliest temperance workers, also a staunch anti-slavery woman. Her husband and son, James, were among the six who voted the first abolition ticket in Parma.

Mr. and Mrs. BROWN were members of the Baptist church in Royalton, and used to walk to service, a distance of five miles, when they could not take the ox team.

Eunice OLDS and her husband, Samuel ROBB, were the first settlers on State road, between the Royalton line and the Chestnut Hills. They came from Webster, N.Y. In three days from the time the first tree was cut, a log house had been built, and the family had moved into it.

Openings were left for door and windows, and over these blankets were hung. Only half the house was roofed at the time. About them was the unbroken forest. Wild deer came and gazed in wonder at the inmates of the lonely dwelling. Wolves and bears were sometimes seen near it.

The solitude of the forest was seldom broken by the presence of their fellow beings. They rarely heard from their old home, for there were few facilities for conveying mail, and when they received a letter they had to pay 25 cents postage on it.

With Mrs. ROBB came her mother, Mrs. OLDS, and her daughter Lavina ROBB, who married Alonzo CARTWRIGHT, and still resides in Parma. These pioneer mothers were not long without the companionship of other women. Before the year 1831 had ended, five other families had settled on the State road.

From N.Y. came Mr. and Mrs. FISK with their daughters, Almeda, Azelia, Lydia and Amanda. With them came George BOYER and his wife, Harriet FISK.

From Dutchess County, N.Y. came John JOHNSON and his wife, Margaret with their daughter, Mary Ann. David F. JONES and wife, Hannah WEAR came from N.J. They brought with them three daughters, Mary Jane, Caroline and Deborah, and their son-in-law, John COOK and his wife, Eliza JONES and daughters Debby Ann and Eliza Jane.

Mrs. JONES was the mother of five sons. One of them, Carlos JONES was the founder of the "JONES Home" for orphan children. These women cheerfully bore the hardships and inconvenience of pioneer life. They lived to see the unbroken forest changed to cultivated farms, dotted with pleasant homes. Their wearing apparel was entirely homemade. It was spun and woven from flax and wool by the mothers and daughters of 1831, and cut out and made into garments by their own hands, and that without the aid of fashion plates. What a contrast in dress the mothers and daughters of 1831 would present beside the woman of 1896!

Miss Clementine PERRY was born in Clinton County, N.Y. She was engaged to be married to Ithiel J. LOCKWOOD. He believed that he could better his condition by emigrating to the West. He reached Parma October, 1830, and purchased a farm on the Independence line road. A year and a half was spent preparing a home, and then he returned for his bride.

In the latter part of January, 1832, they started on their long and wearisome journey to their new home, in a two horse sleigh, leading an extra horse. They reached Parma in February. On this farm Mrs. LOCKWOOD resided till 1857, when she moved to Cleveland. Three daughters and a son were reared in the Parma home. Mrs. LOCKWOOD died in 1892.

Miss Louisa SAXTON and Miss Alma PRINDLE, of East Charlotte, Vermont, married two brothers, James WALLING and Ransom WALLING. In the spring of 1832, soon after their marriage, the husbands came to Parma to find homes for their wives. The young wives waited until fall and then came on to join their husbands. The log houses that had been prepared to receive them had been built on the Royalton line, a half mile from any road. The only way to reach their homes was along a path marked by blazed trees.

The men worked on their farms in the summer and at their trade as coopers in the winter. Her for 18 years they dwelt side by side.

In 1850 Mrs. Ransom WALLING's home was traded for a farm in Royalton, at a point which has since been known as "WALLING's Corners." Here Mrs. WALLING resided for many years. After the death of her husband she moved to Cleveland, where she died in 1892.

Mrs. Louisa WALLING moved to Wisconsin in 1852 and died there.

Somewhere in New England, I think in Vermont, Polly HASTING's life began. Her parents removed to Batavia, N.Y., where she married John PARRISH. Here three sons and four daughters were born to them. In 1834 they came to Parma and settled on the Independence line, in the neighborhood of the NORTONS and LOCKWOODS. Their's was a Christian home. Mrs. PARRISH reared her children in the fear of the Lord. Her sons were faithful Christian men. Hugh L. PARRISH became a loved and honored minister of the M.E. Church, and was at one time Presiding Elder.

Mrs. Polly PARRISH was not permitted to reap the fruit of her seed sowing. From her Parma home, about 1845, she was called to be forever with her Lord. A moss covered stone, in the little cemetery on Independence road, marks her last resting place.

No reminiscences of the pioneer women of Parma would be complete that did not speak of "Aunt Jane KILBORN." She and her husband, Joseph KILBORN, "Uncle Joe" as he was familiarly known, came to Parma in 1833, and settled on the State road. Here they spent the remainder of their days. Mrs. KILBORN was of a bright and happy disposition. She won the friendship of old and young, because of the friendliness of her nature and kindness of her disposition. She reached the age of 84 years, and yet she never grew old in heart.

Her maiden name was Jane MACH, her birthplace, White Hall, N.Y., and she was married at Penfield, N.Y., in 1827. Her home in Parma became the favorite resort of young people, and she retained her love for them to the end of her life.

Mrs. KILBORN was an earnest Christian. She was one of the original member of the Free Will Baptist Church, organized in the school house in that district, about 1834. Associated with her in church work were a number of faithful Christian women. Among them were Mrs. Jane BEALS, Mrs. Margaret JOHNSON, Mrs. Lois POND, Mrs. Chloe BUNKER, Mrs. Polly WARD and Mrs. Maria CLEVELAND.

The minister in those early days resided at a distance, and came Saturday in time to attend the Saturday night prayer meeting. He remained till Monday and was entertained in the homes of these women. Then, many who attended church resided at a distance. They were invited to the homes of these women who feasted them with the "meat which perisheth," as cheerfully and faithfully as the minister had broken to them spiritual food.

Miss Mary Huntington DeWITTE was born in Norwich, Conn., in 1813. She was reared amid the culture and refinement of that city. In 1832 she was married to James M. COGSWELL, then a merchant there. The following year they concluded to seek a home in the West, and came to Parma. Although it had been 15 years since the first settler had built his log home in Parma, the country was yet comparatively new.

It seemed an uninviting and incongenial spot in which to build a home for a cultured and refined young woman of 20. But such women were needed to counteract the influences of an opposing nature, always to be found in a new settlement. It is beyond human power to estimate the elevating and ennobling influence of Mrs. Mary COGSWELL upon the community.

The Parma Congregational church was organized November 7, 1835, with a membership of 12 persons. The sisters in the church were Mrs. Mary COGSWELL, Mrs. Sarah FREEMAN, Mrs. Susan CHAPIN, Mrs. Harriet E. COGSWELL. The Misses Sarah B. FREEMAN, Selenda FREEMAN and Catherine FERRELL. Of the original members only one, Mrs. Selenda FREEMAN EMERSON, is now living. Mrs. Mary COGSWELL and Mrs. Harriet E. COGSWELL both passed from the church militant to the Church triumphant, in 1895.

Mrs. Mary COGSWELL was a woman of earnest faith and fervent spirit. Upon her and her husband devolved, for many years, the duty of entertaining Bible agents, visiting ministers, and strangers connected with church work. Cheerfully and hospitably was this performed. She loved the Sunday school, and was a earnest teacher there, until her advanced years compelled her to resign her work.

She was quiet, retiring, and somewhat reserved in manner. Only when "the books" are opened on the great judgment day can it be known what was wrought by this earnest, consistent life.

Mrs. Harriet DENISON COGSWELL, wife of Frederick F. COGSWELL, and sister of Amos E. DENISON, came from Stonington, Conn., in 1834. They purchased a farm of Jacob COUNTRYMAN on York Street.

Mrs. COGSWELL was a great collector of natural curiosities and of Indian relics. Her father was a sea captain and had brought her strange things and beautiful shells from many parts of the world. She had added to these until she had one of the finest private collections to be found. She delighted in exhibiting this collection to all who visited her. The many strange things she had to show them, and her motherly ways, won the hearts of children. Her sympathetic ways and conversational powers won a large circle of friends whom she delighted to welcome at her home. It might be truly said of her "She had not an enemy."

Mrs. Lydia PALMER WHITNEY, whose nephews, Dwight PALMER and Charles PALMER, were so known in Cleveland, came to Parma in 1836. Her home was over three miles from the Congregational church. But she and her husband at once connected themselves with that church and were rarely absent from its services. Ill health prevented her from taking as prominent and active a position in society as she was qualified to fill. But those who had the privilege of seeing her well-ordered home found in her a warm hearted, helpful friend. Her home contained more books than were to be found in most families; these were freely lent to her sick friends, and helped to brighten many hours of pain.

Mrs. Sally WEAVER TOPPING and her husband William TOPPING came from Bainbridge, N.Y. in 1834. In those pioneer days school teachers "boarded around," but had one place called home to which they could always go, when necessary. Mrs. TOPPING's mission was to make a home for the teacher, and well did she perform this mission, as many a weary,



homesick teacher could testify. Her daughter, Harriet TOPPING HITCHCOCK, to whom we are indebted for many helpful hints, now resides in Grinnel, Iowa.

Mrs. Moses OVIATT (Electra SPAFFORD) was a granddaughter of Thomas CHITTENDON, the first governor of Vermont, her mother being Electa CHITTENDON, who, with her husband, Jacob SPAFFORD, settled in Richfield, O., 1818. Here the daughter, Electa, was born. She married and moved to Parma, 1840, and for nearly a half century the OVIATT homestead was noted for its liberal hospitality. Mrs. OVIATT was one of the most amiable of women, and her whole life was characterized by kindly words and ministrations. Her four children, Martin, Herbert, Sarah and Martha, are all residents of Cleveland, and her granddaughter, Mr. C.M. OVIATT, is well known in the literary circles of that city.

Mrs. Barzilla SNOW (Polly GRINNELL) was a native of Massachusetts, near Boston. After her marriage she lived for a number of years in New Haven, N.Y., and in 1833 emigrated with her husband to Parma, where she died 1855 in about the seventieth year of her age.

Mrs. SMITH possessed unusual gifts of mind and heart. She was a devoted mother, a kind neighbor and true friend. She reared a family of eight sons and three daughters, who, one and all, ever dearly loved and deeply cherished the memory of their noble mother. To the latest hour of her life she was a great reader, and could readily converse on the leading topics of the day.

But two of her children are now living, Leander, a resident of Parma, and Vira Ann, Mrs. Lyman MOUGHTON, who lives near Leavenworth, Kas.

*Mrs. Julia A. HODGMAN  
Historian*

Parma Committee - Lucy A. WARD, Parma; Martha OVIATT HOWLETT, Cleveland; Jane REYNOLDS BROWN, Elyria; Nancy BLISS PEARSE, Bloomingdale, Mich.; Mrs. Harriet TOPPING HITCHCOCK, Sedgwick, Kan.