

## EMIGRATION TO THE MIDWEST



Junius R. Sloan East to Midwest Travels Oil on Canvas 24 x 18 Brauer Museum of Art, 53.01.121

In the summer of 1815 my Uncle Samuel Rice who married my mother's sister, and Reuben Luce, a cousin of my father', became much interested in the fine descriptions given of the beauty of the country in northern Ohio, then known as 'New Connecticut.' They visited Ohio that summer, located a couple of farms, and in the spring of 1816 moved their families and effects out there. My brothers Artemas and Calvin gathered up a scanty wardrobe, put them into packs made of linen cloth made by mother, with axe with handles sticking from the packs and started with them for their western home. They accompanied the teams most of the distance, however they carried their own packs. At Chataqui Lake, Jamestown, my brothers stopped for a month or two and worked, then went on to Ohio. In the fall of 1816 my father made a trip to Ohio in a one horse wagon - was gone about six weeks.

While there he selected his piece of land and the winter and spring following was made busy with preparations forgoing to what was then the far West.

I can remember very distinctly about the last scene about our old home was an auction or as it was called then, a venue, in which our household effects were sold, and how sad my mother's face was as piece after piece were knocked down under the hammer, relics of early life, associated with marriage and the rearing of nine children. The day was over, the scene closed, our remaining articles consisting of beds, bedding, loom and quill wheel and some other weaving appendages were packed in our covered wagon, the farewells were said, tears fell, our driver Anson mounted the wagon and drove away Westward, and the Curtain [sic] dropped and shut most of us out forever from our happy Childhood [sic] home. New scenes now opened to us -- the novelty of travelling, new scenes every day, and to the youngest of us who soon forgot the sad scenes of parting with our dear old home and friends forever, it was pleasant and exciting. About two days journey from our old home my father had a sister living, where we stopped a day or two and then proceeded onward to Saratoga or as it was then called Sandy Hill where I had another Aunt, my father's sister, where we rested for some days. The springs had then begun to attract a little attention, the little dwarf pines that grew there were cleared away in patches, and a few unpretentious houses and shops erected and the springs were fenced around, platforms laid about them, and facilities for dipping up water. In a circumference

of half a mile there were probably one hundred and fifty inhabitants. Such was Saratoga in 1817. Our journey from thence was of much interest to a child like me; we were ferried over streams too deep to ford in old rickety scows but not knowing much I had no fears. (One circumstance however I shall always remember; that was the first Indian I ever saw.) Among our neighbors in Massachusetts were a number of old men who were pioneers there and had served in the Old French and Indian Wars while we were yet Colonies [sic] to Great Britain. They generally conversed more or less of their privations during those wars, and tell of the numerous atrocities committed by Indians and recount the horrible barbarities committed by them. These things made deep impressions upon my mind and my nightmares were always Indians attacking & torturing me, from which I would wake calling upon my father for help.

Like all boys I was lazy and perhaps more so than some, (at least, they used to tell me so) and I lagged far behind the wagon. We were up in Oneida County in New York where there was a large Colony [sic] or Settlement [sic] of Oneida Indians. They were perfectly civilized and dressed in civilized fashion. I was far behind the wagon, when I met two Indians. Though I never saw one before I knew them at a glance. My laziness forsook me instantly, and there was good time made until I came up with the wagon. From that day my lagging ceased.) We halted a day or two at Buffalo to rest and recruit our jaded horses preparatory to encountering through passage which was then termed the Cattaraugus's Swamp extending from Buffalo to Silver Creek. Buffalo was then a scattering village with few houses, it having been burned three years before by the British. My father, mother and myself went down to the creek (there was no harbor there then nor for years afterward) and went on board a little schooner of about twenty tons, owned in Conneaut or what was Salem, and sailed by Capt. Ward. It was proposed, as my mother's health was at that time very poor that she go up the Lake by water, but for some reason she did not go, but we relieved our team somewhat by shipping a heavy box on the schooner. We were four weary days making the distance of twenty eight miles from Buffalo to Silver Creek, keeping many times one on each side of the wagon to keep it from turning over. From Silver Creek the roads along those lake ridges were very passable, and had you stood in the then wilderness where you are now measuring tape in a fine brick store; in the after part of the day of July 3rd, 1817 you would have seen a jaded and tired span of horses hauling a covered wagon [sic] westward accompanied by a sunburned, dusty, travel-stained lot of boys and girls, a pale, tired woman sitting in the wagon [sic] with a little boy about two years old, her youngest, while a dark complexioned black-haired man slightly tinged with grey (my father) energetically superintended all. That was our family and your ancestors. Somewhere west of Elk Creek and between that and Springfield, we spent the last night out, of that long and wearisome journey. The next day, the fourth, we met Artemas and Calvin about a mile west of Kingsville and we were housed with my Uncle Rice who married my mother's sister. We were in New Connecticut our future home.

The Curtain rises again and new scenes open before us. We must have home and shelter. The strokes of the axe echo in the forest, trees are felled and cut into suitable lengths, -- they are hauled to a small opening, the willing inhabitants around help & they are piled into walls for a house, the fro [wedge] rives the large oak blocks into staves or shakes used for shingles, they are held in position by laying poles upon them. Straight grained soft wood are rived into punchions for

floor, a hole through the roof serves at first as a chimney, and in ten days from our arrival we are home in our rude cabin. Such was pioneer life in Ohio. Our first days and weeks there were days and weeks of privation, the wheat was not harvested, flour was scarce, for there were few mills, much of the grain was carried down to a mill on Elk Creek down in the valley. Meat was scarce, cattle and hogs had not then been raised in any quantity. Before fall however we had a cow which pastured in a lot a mile and a half from us, where we went night and morning to milk. Our house was chinked and mudded up, a stick chimney built, an out-door oven built, a log barn built and a little room to set up the loom. That winter Artemas taught school, at Monroe, about four miles from us. I attended going through the woods. About midwinter I went one morning and found the school house, books and slates a heap of smouldering ruins and was glad. My brother Gamaliel next younger than Artemas was not satisfied with Ohio. He left an attraction in Massachusetts. He was so discontented that after staying there about four weeks my father gave him one of the horses, a saddle and bridle, money to bear his expenses back, and to most of us he bid a last farewell. Only a few of us have ever seen him since. He died a few years since. (Mrs. Geo. Stockwell of Ashtabula, whose husband was killed in the great railroad disaster, was his daughter.) Anson did not take to or like farming at all, very soon went to Ashtabula to work at blacksmithing with John Burrill. Calvin, Horace and myself staid [sic] at home. The forests fell beneath the blows of our axes. I was reared with an axe in my hand, three farms were cleared. We had plenty to eat and our mother cooked it with exquisite skill to suit our every taste. Artemas very soon married Maria Webster and went and lived at the old Webster homestead on a small portion of which he now lives. In the meantime Calvin had married, and Horace becoming of age he left Ohio and went to the State of New York with a man by the name of Munger who at that time lived in Ohio and moved back to New York. He built the first frame house in the center of the town, standing on the corner where the post office now stands. Drusilla had married and my sister Anna, Myself and Emory were all that remained at home. Emory was then quite young, and much hard work devolved upon me. In some of the busiest portions of the year my father hired some help, once a man for the season, but I worked very hard, too hard for one growing as rapidly as I did then, and at nineteen I broke down entirely. ... (The following summer, not being able to work I taught school in Kingsville center for one dollar per week and boarded around among the parents of scholars....)

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