

**EARLY DAYS OF THE PIONEERS  
CUYAHOGA COUNTY  
AND BROOKLYN TOWNSHIP**

**BY  
EBENEZER FOSTER**

The writer of the history, Mr. Ebenezer Foster, was born on April 19, 1810 in North  
Stonington, Conn.

## FOSTER AND FISHES IN THE EAST

Jan. 1, 1880

My own personal knowledge of the events of which I write runs back sixty-three years. That which was handed down thru my mother's family runs back one hundred years or more. That which was handed down from one family to another of my father's kindred, runs back two hundred years or more.

I will first write what has been handed down to me thru the family of my father's brother. They say that our great-grandfather on my father's side, came from Scotland to America with three brothers.<sup>1</sup> One settled in Molbren, two more to some other place, and the fourth at Watch Hill, R.I. The latter proved to be my great grandfather. I suppose that he married an American woman. There are only two sons handed down to us, namely my grandfather and his brother, George Foster.

Uncle George Foster married a Davis. They raised no children. Grandfather married a Mane.<sup>1</sup> They had two sons, Thomas and Jonathan. While these boys were quite young their mother died. How long he lived a widower is not known.

In due time grandfather went up to North Stonington, about fourteen miles, near Pendleton Hill, to a noted place called Billings's Pond. Doubtless this name was given the pond because Mr. Billings owned most of the land around it. I should think there was about one hundred acres of spring water in this pond. A grist mill was run by the waters of its outlet.

At this place grandfather Foster gave his hand to Sarah Billings in marriage. He took her to his home in Watch Hill. In due time, two sons were born, Denison Foster and Michael B. Foster. The latter was my father. How long grandfather and grandmother lived together is not know, but while the boys were growing, grandfather died, and grandmother had these four boys to bring up. When my father was a boy he had a weeping sinew on his knee and was obliged to walk with a crutch or cane. It was supposed that wrong treatment made his knee stiff.

When father and Uncle Denison were of proper ages, they were each put out to a trade. Denison to the carpenter's and father to the tailor's trade. Thomas and Jonathan went out into the world to care for themselves.

Of their history, I know but little. Jonathan married a woman near where he lived, by the name of York and moved into Pennsylvania. He made us a visit about forty years ago. I shall say no more about these two boys, but shall speak more of the other two and of grandmother Foster.

After the boys had learned their trades, they went out to work for themselves. Denison went to the Genessee country in the state of New York and married. I suppose

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<sup>1</sup> Known family trees that have been found online don't support the theory that the ancestor came from Scotland. The first ancestor shown came from Wales

that he worked at his trade. Father went to New York and worked at his trade a short time, then returned and went into Groton and worked for the different families there, going from place to place.

He made his stopping place with Mr. Ebenezer Fish Sr. Mr. Fish had a large family growing up. His oldest daughter, Abigail, was about eighteen or twenty years of age. She and father soon became well acquainted and were married.

Grandmother Foster was then left alone on the old farm at Watch Hill. It was a beautiful place, the farm running to the seashore.

It was a hard farm to work, as it was rough and stony and worth but little for farming purposes.

Land at that time around Watch Hill was low. As Uncle George lived on one part of the old farm and as he desired to keep the farm together, bought grandmother's interest in it.

About this time, grandmother gave her hand in marriage to a man by the name of Edwards. I never learned much about his man. I suppose that grandmother was about forty-five or fifty at this time, a stout healthy woman and very neat and particular in all her movements. They moved some distance from Watch Hill. I think near Legard<sup>2</sup>, where Edwards ran a great mill while he lived, which was but a short time.

A short time after father was married, they moved about twenty miles away, rented a house somewhere between Norwich and Preston City and kept a grocery store. While there, they lost their second born, a little girl, Lydia Foster. It is not known how long they lived at this place. In the Fall, while they lived there, grandfather Edwards went on horse-back, a distance of about seventeen miles, to see father and mother. It was very cold riding, but he arrived there all right. That evening he was taken sick with gravel. They did all they could to save him, but all to no relief. He died the next morning. Grandmother Edwards was sent for, and they buried him with his kindred.

After this, grandmother Edwards made her home with us, more or less, while she lived. She died sixty-three years ago at our house in Groton and was buried in the old Mystic Cemetery.

I have spoken of grandmother's death. In my further remarks I will speak of her life.

Grandmother Billings Foster, afterwards Edwards, was brought up at that romantic spot, vix. Billings Mill. As her brother, Nathan Billings, owned a large farm bordering on this pond, and she had many other relatives living there, and as she was born and had spent her youthful days here, our family was anxious to get a place near-by.

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<sup>2</sup> Ebenezer Foster probably meant Ledyard, Connecticut, which is a short distance north of Groton.

Father went up into their neighborhood and bought a small place of thirty-two acres, upon which were a large old one-story house and barn, an orchard and a cider mill. The land was good when you could find it, but seven-eighths of it was stony. Father built an addition of a storeroom to the house and finished a room in the chambers for grandmother Edwards. She was a great weaver as well as worker, so she lived part of the time in one of our rooms, and ran a loom.

After a few years our family was quite large and the farm did but little toward supporting it. As father's work called him some distance from home a great part of the time, we left the old place and went down about seven miles towards Groton, and rented a small farm. This was a bad move, for father was no farmer, and besides, he was lame and could not do much at farming. I was in my sixth year and did all I could. There were a number older than I who worked hard.

We planted corn and potatoes and had a good garden, but there came a frost in June which cut off the crops, and another in August. Corn did not ripen. There was a great deal of moldy corn ground and the flour made into bread that year. In the meantime, the old farm was worked, from which we obtained some good corn, as the farm was situated on the highlands where the frost did not touch it much, and we fattened a cow and killed her, so we wintered thro. It was in January of this winter that Eveline Food<sup>3</sup> (sic) was born. I remember the snow was about eighteen inches deep, and the weather was very cold. Father hitched his horse to a log that was in our woodpile, and drew it to the schoolhouse thru the snow, to make a path for us. We lived on this place one year and then moved to Groton in sight of the place where mother was born (Ebenezer Fish's home). Here we spent the summer. Father went to New York to work. Early that Fall we moved to Pequannock, about two miles distant, where we spent the Winter. In the Spring, we moved into our other house with Uncle Eben Fish's family. This place was in the neighborhood where mother was raised and it was here that grandmother Edwards died. I was at this time in my eighth year. While we lived here, Uncle Ebenezer Fish Jr., with his wife and two children, in company with his brother Daniel Fish, wife and two children, started with an ox team for Ohio.

We remained on this place thru the winter but moved back to our old place in the Spring, having been away three years.

I will now tell what I know about my grandfather Fish's family. His father's name was Jonathan, in whose family were several children, among whom were some girls, but only two sons were handed down to us. The names of these two sons were Joseph and Ebenezer. The latter was our grandfather. The old homestead which lay in a beautiful valley between Mystic and Fort Hill, was divided between these two sons. A large spring brook was running thru grandfather's part. The house was surrounded by beautiful and romantic scenery, the picture of which may be seen at John Fish's in Brooklyn Village. Grandfather Fish had ten children, all of whom grew up to manhood and womanhood and with families lived, some in Groton and some in Ohio. Some time before this date, some families by the names of Morgan and Gallop moved from Groton

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<sup>3</sup> Eveline Thankful married a Foote.

to Ohio, who were well acquainted with grandmother's people. Grandfather's brother Joseph had a son named James, who was married and had two children. They lived in a part of grandfather's house. Grandfather had a son named Moses. Moses and his cousin James were anxious to move into this new country, Ohio. The news from the neighbors who had moved there before made them more so. The families that moved first, settled in Newburgh. In the Fall of 1811, one year before the war, James Fish's family, including his wife, two children and mother-in-law, and Moses Fish his cousin, put their heads together and with an ox team moved to Ohio. They stopped in Newburgh. This township had been partly settled for several years. Many had some of the comforts of life, while others went hungry and partially cold.

At this time, Brooklyn was a wild forest, full of the red man. The township had been surveyed and run into quarter sections by agents who lived in Connecticut near where these first settlers lived. These agents traded lands with many of them and gave them the chance to select in Brooklyn. They came on and were selecting their farms.

James and Moses Fish thought they would go over into Brooklyn to see these lands. James selected the old homestead where I. W. Fish lived, where Mayor Bliss now resides, and one more piece where Wade House<sup>4</sup> now stands. Moses selected a quarter section where Brooklyn Village now stands. James built a log cabin and with his family moved into it. They soon became frightened by the Indians and went back to Newburgh. While here, another child was born. Soon after this, some families moved in near where their selected land was, so they went back to their cabin. About this time, Moses Fish wrote to brother Ebenezer and, speaking of the land that he had selected, wanted him to come on and take half of it. Ebenezer came, and they divided between them. About this time a road was run from Newburgh to Rockport. This road divided their land in the middle. Ebenezer took the land on the north side, and Moses, that on the south. They built themselves a little log cabin not far from the spot where Cranford Brainard's garden now stands. There they both lived until the War of 1812 with England broke out. Uncle Ebenezer enlisted for six months and came out with honors. The war continued and Moses was drafted. His health was rather poor, and Ebenezer took his place, and served during the war, thus showing the truly noble spirit possessed by Ebenezer. About this time, a family of Brainards came on to improve their lands. They moved into Uncle Ebenezer's cabin until they could build them a house. This family consisted of eight grown men and women. In a short time, a large double house was built about where Leonard Pixley's house now stands. Moses Fish's land lay about six rods from their house. Uncle Ebenezer told me that in a little while he saw Uncle Moses seated on a log, courting one of the Brainard girls. In a short time, they were married and went on to the farm.

The war with England was over now. Uncle Ebenezer cleared a small piece of land and set out an orchard and built a fence around it. The orchard is the old one that is on Mr. Seymore Trowbridges' place. He worked around a little while wherever he could find work. About this time, grandfather and grandmother Fish (Ebenezer Sr.) came out from

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<sup>4</sup> Wade House was located at the southwest corner of Wade Avenue and Columbus St. (Wade is about 4 blocks north of Clark Avenue.)

Connecticut to see their boys. They started with one horse and wagon and came as far as Buffalo, where they left the horse and wagon and took a boat to Cleveland.<sup>5</sup> From there, they traveled thru the woods to Brooklyn Center. They soon found the boys, and there was doubtless great joy in the meeting. A deer was killed and all were made joyous.

They visited their son Moses' family, also James Fish's family, and Moses' father-in-law's family. They then went over to Newburgh to see their old friends, Morgan and Gallop<sup>6</sup>, after which they returned to Brooklyn where they remained with their friends seven days. They then returned home the same way they came. Ebenezer Fish Jr. went back with them. He went on to the sound fishing with Alexander Ingham, who was the father of W. A. Ingham of the present well known book firm of Cleveland. He kept at this business about three years. In the mean time, he bought a temporary home near his father's. It included an old house and two or three acres of land. Soon after he commenced fishing, he gave his hand in marriage to Miss Joanna Stanton, a smart, worthy woman. They soon went to their little place, where they lived about three yers. While here, two children were born whose names were Eliza, afterward Mrs. Corbin, and Emily, who is now Mrs. Emily Booth. About this time, Joanna said to her husband, "You say you have a farm in Ohio?" "Yes, a good one." "Let us move on it."

His brother, Daniel Fish, who was the father of Prof. Eben Fish of Calvin College, and Leonard Fish of Brooklyn Village, was married and was living in one part of grandfather Fish's (Ebenezer Sr.) house. They had two children. These two families put their heads and hands together and prepared to move to Ohio. They bought two yoke of oxen, also a large wagon; this they covered, loaded in and were ready for a start. They started from Uncle Daniel's, then came to our house to take in Uncle Ebenezer's family. At this date, which was 1818, I was in my eighth year, and I remember well many of the movements that were made in getting ready to take the journey. The women got into the wagon with their children, saying goodbye, and the men drove the teams. After a long and tedious journey, they landed in Ohio among friends.

Uncle Ebenezer soon built him a log house and moved into it. Uncle Daniel went over the creek and bought a place, built a log house and moved his family into it.

Both of these families passed thru many hardships and privations before they had the limited comforts of life.

Uncle Ebenezer was, at the time he passed away, which was in 1880, ninety-three years of age. His wife, Joanna, died over thirty ago of cholera. Mother Foster-Fuller died of the same disease seven hours afterward. Uncle Daniel died on his old farm in 1880, and his wife about five years before. He was about 87 years old, and was in his second childhood. He lost his mind before his death and did not know his own children. Uncle Ebenezer's mental faculties were some better, but could not keep the time so as to know when Sunday came; but notwithstanding the less of his mind in this way, he was able to

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<sup>5</sup> Margin notes, on the copy this document was transcribed from, are very light and difficult to read but it appears that it gives the name of the boat as "Walking the Water".

<sup>6</sup> Probably Christopher Morgan (married to Deborah Ledyard) and either Isaac or Jabesh Gallup. Both owned property near the present day Broadway Ave. and Union Ave.

shave his own beard very well as long as he lived. He died the same as he had lived, full of hope of eternal life beyond the grave.

After Uncle Moses Fish had been in Ohio about twelve years, he concluded that he would return to Connecticut to make his parents and friends a visit. He started with a pack on his back on foot to make that long tedious journey of six hundred miles. He arrived at the old homestead about bed-time one night in the month of June. The family had all retired except grandfather. Moses went in and asked if he could stay overnight, for he was very tired having come all the way from the west. Grandfather was not in the habit of keeping strangers and did not answer him readily, but as soon as he spoke of coming from the west, grandmother Fish jumped from her bed and asked him if he had seen any of her three sons that lived in Ohio. He said that he was some acquainted with them.

John Fish, who is now living on Forest St. in Brooklyn Village, and is about 60 years old, is the only son of Uncle Ebenezer Fish. Ozias Fish, now living on Newburgh St.<sup>7</sup> is about 70 years old, and is the oldest Fish now living. He is the son of Moses Fish and has been an eye witness to all the improvements made in Brooklyn township. He helped to build our second Methodist frame meeting house. There are three more brothers in the west, and one Lorenzo Fish living in Cleveland on Holmden Ave<sup>8</sup>.

I cannot close my remarks about the Fishes unless I speak about James Fish's son, Isaiah W. Fish. He was born 70 years ago in a log house on the knell of ground opposite Gay's pond. He was the first white child born in Brooklyn township and for 40 years served as a local preacher. He was a noble hearted man, and gave \$2,000 for our new brick Methodist Church. There is much in his family history that would be of great interest.

Returning again to Moses and his visit east. The fatted calf was killed and he was made happy among his friends. He rested several days, visiting friends in Groton, then came up to visit our family. My mother was his oldest sister. We lived in North Stonington, 17 miles from Groton. Moses spoke well of the new country, and felt anxious to see us able to move out there. He wanted my brother George to go back with him. George was my father's eldest boy, stout, healthy and about twenty years of age. In a short time Moses went back to Groton. Father and Mother also went down to visit with their brother. They finally made up their minds to let George go to Ohio with him. Then all their energies were bent towards getting him ready. We raised our own wool and our women spun and wove it into cloth. We sent it to the factory to have it dressed, and father made him a good suit of clothes. He was now ready to start, being well clothed and having money enough to bear his expenses.

I think they started in September. A man by the name of Simeon Chester, who was a brother of Daniel Fish's wife, went with them. The three started with packs on their backs and arrived at Brooklyn after traveling about three weeks. George made it

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<sup>7</sup> Present-day Denison Avenue.

<sup>8</sup> This was originally typed as Holenden.

home with Uncle Ebenezer Fish and Chester at his sister's (Daniel Fish's wife), where he stayed thru the winter. While there, he bought a piece of land partly cleared. I think his place was about one hundred rods from Daniel Fish's and consisted of about 80 acres.

Mr. Chester made a bargain with Daniel Fish, who agreed to put him up two log houses which were to be done by the first of September. Chester then returned to Groton. His family consisted of his father and mother, who were old people, their three daughters and a granddaughter.

He was well acquainted with grandfather Fish's (Ebenezer Sr.) family and he offered his hand to Eveline Fish, who accepted it and in a short time, they were married. He now had a family of eight to care for, as his father was not able to do much. They now bent all their energies to get ready to start for Ohio by the first of September.

Our family felt anxious to go with them. I remember some of the plans that were made to enable us to start on the journey. The place where we lived was sold to pay our debts. We got some money for our movables, sold some sheep, and one cow, and gathered together what we could. This was about the last of August. I was working out, one mile and a half from home, for three dollars a month. I had worked hard one day dragging in rye, with cattle and horse, and my chores. It was about dark when word came to me that grandfather Fish had come to move us down to Groton. I went home and in a short time we left the romantic spot where we were born.

We traveled all night, I driving a cow and some sheep and arrived at grandfather's the next morning, where we had about one week to get ready to start to Ohio, with the other company. We had two horses, but they were not well matched to work together. Grandfather kindly offered to let us have his oxen, so we left him one of our horses and hitched the oxen and other horse to the wagon after having covered it with hoops and cotton cloth and loaded in our goods. We were now ready to start. Before we started, we received the sad news that Uncle Moses Fish had lost his wife. She had left five children. It was spoken of among us that one of the Chester girls would make Moses a good wife; the one that we selected was Harriet Chester.

Now we all started together for the west. Our team out-traveled Mr. Chester, although he had two yoke of stout oxen. He was very heavily loaded and had to ship some of his goods from Buffalo to Cleveland.

After passing thru mud and storm, fatigue and hardships, we arrived in Brooklyn after thirty-three days travel and Mr. Chester after thirty-six days travel. The first relative we met was James Fish, mother's cousin. We stopped there a little while. They had been in Brooklyn a number of years, but at this time did not have all the comforts of life. They had a good crop of corn and potatoes on the ground, but had nothing to make bread of, therefore did not urge us to stay. We were in sight of the houses of mother's two brothers, Ebenezer and Moses Fish. We stopped with Uncle Ebenezer's with our large family and were made welcome to the best they had in the house. Uncle Moses had broken up housekeeping and the family was living at his mother-in-law's, Mrs. Osias Brainard.



My sister Nancy was a good housekeeper and she consented to keep house for Moses, so he took his children home. She stayed there thru that fall and winter until spring, when the proverb was fulfilled, for Moses was married to Harriet Chester. This marriage took place Jan. 22, 1824.

Uncle Ebenezer had five children and, with our family of twelve, made seventeen in the family. We were there about ten days when we bought 23 acres of land of Ebenezer and Moses Fish; this land was on Newburgh St. A great part of it was cleared, on which was a good log house and two other buildings. There was also a small orchard. We bought this place for seven dollars an acre. We had thirty-five dollars left when we arrived in Brooklyn, and we sold our wagon for seventeen dollars, so we made a payment of \$52.00.

We found George well, he was working for Judge Barber in what was called Ohio City, now Cleveland.

We managed to get in a small piece of wheat and rye very late in the Fall. Father got all the work he could find. There were a good many dead trees on the clearings, and we boys cut a good many down, burning some up, and some we split into rails of which we built a fence. In the month of Feb., we made some sugar. Then I worked a while for Jerry Gates. In the mean time, father went down to Edwin Foot's to work, and he hired me out to work for him for nine months for fifty dollars. I was to go to school for three months and do chores for my board. I commenced work here the 15<sup>th</sup> of Aug. While there, in the month of Aug., father was taken sick with fever and died. He had been in Ohio less than one year.

I have not been plain enough in my former remarks to mention the hardships that we passed thru during the first year we were in Ohio. The settlers did no raise provisions enough for their own families, for they had but little clearing around their log houses. Nearly all the country was a dense forest. It is plain to see what we did to pass thru the first winter we lived there. We all worked out as much as we could in order to obtain something to live on.

Occasionally, father would get some corn and a piece of pork or venison. Late in the fall there were a good many hogs and they gave us some of the meat, which helped us very much.

I stated in my former remarks that father hired me out to Edwin Foot for nine months, the time to begin, the 15<sup>th</sup> of April. I started before breakfast. I must say we had a very little to make a breakfast out of. Mother put a piece of sugar into my hand and I started, with my little bundle of clothes, and soon arrived there all right. Four days more I was 14 years old. I was in a good place, but it was rather hard for me, for Mr. Foot was away surveying land the greater part of the time, and I was left with a great deal to see to. The cows run in the woods and I often had to go a mile for them after dark. I often found them by the sound of a bell. I would find my way home again by following the cows, for after I started them they would make directly for home.

I worked out the nine months, and turned the wages to pay for mother's place. I then went to school the three months. This term of school was a dear one for me. The school house to which I went was almost to Brighton, over on Akins' land, south of Reeves' house beyond the swamp. I often did the chores, then went down to Skinner's bottom land, which was about one and a half miles from Mr. Foot's, to fodder young cattle. I would then go almost to Brighton to school. Besides all this, I had no dinner, as they had but two meals a day in winter. This was very hard work for me. While working the nine months, I lost several days, which Mr. Foot said I might make up after school was out. So after school closed, I was ready to make up the lost time. Mr. Foot set me to chopping up tops of fallen trees. I could chop very well until about one o'clock; but not having any dinner, my strength to swing the axe would be gone by this time, and I could do but little more until supper time. This taught me a lesson that I remembered, so that in after years, I gave my boys three meals a day, work or play.

They had three meals a day in the summertime, and they did not realize how much I suffered for the want of my dinner. They meant all right, they were very clever people.

My years' work was finished and I returned home. I was now fifteen years of age. George came to care for the family. Three of the boys now went out into the world to care for themselves. I was among this number. Nathan went into Cleveland to learn the tanners trade, Daniel went to Judge Barber's, I worked around the best I could and Sally and Nancy went to Cleveland to work.

One year after we moved to Ohio, Uncle Ebenezer Fish, with his family, went back to Conn. to visit. They stayed there, I think, about a year before they returned. A daughter was born while there, the present Hannah Fowels [sic]; this was in 1816<sup>9</sup>.

About this time, mother had an offer of marriage to a man by the name of Fuller, who was a smart old man of about seventy years. He was an old Revolutionary soldier and was drawing a pension. He had five children, four boys and one girl, but all were grown up and cared for themselves. His home was in Strongsville, where he ran a grist mill. He had no land of his own but he rented a farm. Mother accepted his hand and she and the children went to Strongsville to live. She gave George liberty to sell her place and buy one near them. He did so, and took up a good farm and paid some down. I think he had about seventy acres and a good piece of it was cleared. He gave mother a live lease of his farm. He boarded with father Fuller and worked his place about three years. Eight head of cattle were bought and put on the place, and he set out an orchard and built a log barn. He seemed to be doing very well.

I had bargained for about 60 acres of wild land of Judge Barber for, I think, \$6.00 an acre. This land lay between the Ridge Road and Jones' and Belden's land on the north

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<sup>9</sup> This appears to be a typographical error. A more reasonable year, based on the context, would be 1826 since the Fosters moved to Ohio in 1823, Michael B. Foster died in 1824, the Fish family went back for a visit a year later and stayed a year.

and Storer on the west. It was then very wet and swampy. There was no running thru it for some time after. I had paid a little on this land and went to work for Judge Barber by the month to pay for it. In July, I was taken with a fever and I was laid up for several weeks. When I became able to go out to Uncle Ebenezer Fish's, I stayed there some time doing some light work for my board. While I was there, I received the sad news that brother George was very sick with a fever and was not expected to live. He wanted me to come and see him, which I did without delay. I found him very low and out of his head, so he was not able to do any business with me. I think he lived three or four days before he passed into the spirit world. We think he had treasures there that would outweigh all the charms of earth. He was an every day Christian. This was in Aug., 1829. George being at the age of 23 when he died. Our sister, Nancy Curtiss, was with him during his sickness, and she did everything she could for his comfort.

At the time I am writing this, nearly all of our large family of twelve children, and father and mother, have gone across the river to the other world. Only three living now - Nathan, Eveline and Ebenezer.

Father Fuller was taken sick some time before George was. When George was taken sick, father was moved to one of his sons but lived but a short time. Mother was now left alone again with her large family to care for. I volunteered to stay thru the winter to take care of mother and the children and settle up George's business. In March, I made some sugar.

As mother's mind seemed to keep running to Brooklyn as well as my own, I concluded to sell mother's interest in George's land, and, if possible, get back the old place again. There was a family by the name of Wilkinson in which were three boys, grown up men. These boys wanted this place and they made us an offer for an interest in it. (I do not know what Geo. paid for the place, but I suppose about three hundred dollars) I found out what these men would do, and then started for Ridgeville on foot to find the Rev. Mr. Gilmore, the father of Mrs. J.C. Brainard, of Brooklyn, the owner of our old homestead. I found that Gilmore had lost his wife some time before and was now boarding in a family by the name of Jordon. This family was keeping his little girl. I found he would sell us the place back quite low, and he would give us time to make payments. He set a day when he would meet me at Strongsville Center, at old Mr. Pepes', to have the writings made out. In the mean time we sold our interest in George's land with payments satisfactory to all parties. Mr. Gilmore met us as he agreed, and the papers were made out. The notes the Wilkinsons gave us were turned over to Gilmore, which, I think, paid for the old homestead. George had enough hay on his place to keep his stock thru the winter, but none to spare. We turned some of the cattle in the weeds and took one yoke of oxen and one cow with us when we moved to Brooklyn which was the 15<sup>th</sup> of April. We went into the old log house where father died, on the spot where Leonard Foster now lives. Daniel then came home to help care for the family, so I was a free boy once more.

About three years before this date sister Sally had an offer of marriage by a widower whose name was Pixley, and who lived in Richfield. He was about 45 years old. He had no children by his first wife. He owned a good farm at Bangs Corners in the

northwestern part of that town. He was an intelligent, Christian man, a great reader, and belonged to the Presbyterian Church. Mr. Pixley and Sally were married and had nine children, six of whom grew to manhood and womanhood. Mr. Pixley died about 35 years ago, and Sally about 13 years ago. About three years after Sally was married, Nancy went out there to make them a visit. While there, she became acquainted with a widower by the name of Milton Curtiss. This man was a farmer and owned a farm which joined Pixley's, in the corner of Hinckly. He had three small girls to bring up. We offered his hand to Nancy, and she accepted, and they were married. They had four children, but the eldest was only about six years old when he died. The other three grew up to manhood, but at the recent date there is only one living, James Milton Curtiss. Two of the three children were married and have raised families in the west country. The third one died in her teens. I shall say no more about these families for the present.

Before Uncle Ebenezer Fish and family returned from the East he found that grandmother and grandfather wanted to move to Ohio, as all their children were there except the youngest daughter, Matilda Fish, who was living at home with them. When Uncle Ebenezer came back, he told his brothers how anxious they were to sell their old homestead and come to Ohio. The three boys then made arrangements and sent Ebenezer down to Groton to help sell grandfather's place. He got the land surveyed and they sold to one of the neighbors. I never knew how much they sold the farm for, but I know that land was very low in these days. This was in 1823. They moved early in the fall, and there were happy greetings by both parents and children. Uncle Moses Fish wanted them to settle near him, so he let them have about 12 acres of wild land, which was the place where the old orchard stands on the Fuller farm. Grandfather bought a place joining, which ran to the creek. This made in all about 25 acres of beautiful land lying between two valleys. In a short time, grandfather built a log house into which they moved as soon as they could. They enjoyed themselves here very much, having very good health for such old people.

About two years after this, they built a small farm house in which they lived about three years. Then grandfather was taken sick of the fever and died of that disease. A short time after grandfather's death, his daughter, Matilda, was married to Joseph Williams. They lived some time on the old place and took care of grandmother, but after a while, they moved away and grandmother's place was sold and she went to live with her children.

About this time, Alexander Ingham, wife and son came to Ohio to spend the fall and winter visiting. They soon fell in love with Brooklyn and bought of Seth Brainard about 50 acres of land, where Edwin Foster and Mr. Pixley now live. He then bought 23 acres of land of Moses Fish's children. This land joined that which he bought of Mr. Brainard on the east, where that orchard now stands. During that winter, Mr. Ingham got in some logs and received a bill for lumber - enough to build a house. He returned east in the spring. He then made his calculations to move to Ohio early the next fall. They did so, bringing with them a carpenter to build the house, which soon was put up and enclosed. The chimneys were partly up the first of Nov., when cold weather came on, which continued until spring. The cold came on so suddenly that a good many did not dig their potatoes that fall, but they remained in the ground thru the winter and were dug

in the spring. In the early spring the house was finished and the family moved into it. I went to work for them and was there about one year. They built an ell to the house and his brother-in-law, Mr. Eldridge, moved in; they lived there, I think, about one year, when he built a house of his own.

About the time our family moved to Ohio, Mr. John Boylen<sup>10</sup> [sic] was courting Aunt Eunice Fish. They were married the next spring and moved to Vermont, where they lived several years. They had a family of four children. They had not much property and they were induced to move to Ohio. This was at the time when Mr. Eldridge moved into his own house, so they came on and went into the ell where Mr. Eldridge lived.

After mother had sold her interest in her farm, Daniel sold it, together with stock and all movables, to John Boyden and his brother Eben Boyden, who was a preacher in Cleveland.. In a short time, they moved into this place. Grandmother Fish went to live with them. While living there, she passed away, being about 88 years old. Grandfather Fish was about 70 when he died.

Parents and children of that large family are all gone at the present time, 1880, but one, Eunice Boyden who is 86 years old, and who retains her mental faculties very well for such an old lady.

I stated in my former remarks that I moved mother to the old homestead in Brooklyn, then Daniel came home to care for her and the children, and I went to care for myself. I packed my clothes in a trunk and took a boat for Buffalo. From there, I went by the canal to Schenectady where I took a stage for Albany, then I went down the Hudson to New York, where I stayed two days. I then took a boat up the Sound to Mystic River. I went on shore at Alexander Ingham's.

I remained there about three weeks, visiting mother's three sisters and other friends. I then went to Stonington, where they were making a breakwater, which they were building out into the water for a harbor for vessels. I hired out for twelve dollars a month and stayed there about one and a half months.

I think that it was about the first of September. Brother Nathan went down east before I did, and he had been traveling thru this country to find work, but finding none that suited him, he wanted me to return to Ohio with him, which I did, returning the same way that I came.

We found mother shaking with fever and ague. I stayed there about three weeks. I could get no money for my work because everything was so dull.

This canal was being built then and was completed as far as Akron. I packed my best clothes into my trunk and my working clothes into father's old pertemonaie in which he used to carry his tailors gees and shears. It was the 7<sup>th</sup> of Oct., 1830 when I told Nathan I wanted him to see me across the river, which he did. I then bade him good bye,

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<sup>10</sup> John Boyden

slung my pertemonaie on my back and started up the tow-path. I traveled 100 miles and stopped seven miles beyond New Philadelphia, where I hired out to a sub-contractor on the canal, for twelve dollars a month and board. I worked one and a half months. That contractor failed to pay his hands so I took a note for eighteen dollars. I remained with some others to finish the banking a month or more, for which I received the same wages per month as before.

Before I finish, I wish to speak of mother. When she sold her interest in the place to Daniel, I let her have an acre of land, on which she could build a house. This land was where George Foster's house now stands. Mother had a good little house built and moved in. Her health was very good for such an old lady, and this is the main reason that she lived so happily for two or three years in her new house. She finally concluded that she would like to go back east on a visit, so she rented her place and returned to Conn., accompanied by Aunt Eveline Chester, Alexander Ingham, wife and son. Mother visited friends in Groton, then went to Watch Hill to see Uncle George Foster. He was very well for an old man of about eighty years. She stayed with him several hours and enjoyed her visit very much. She found that he had lost his wife and was living with a family by the name of Davis who were relatives of his wife. This family had rented his place. In a short time after this, Uncle Foster died and was buried with his kindred.

After mother returned to Groton, the company returned to Ohio, all in good health. After a short time, mother went into her house again where she lived the greater part of the time while life lasted. She was a strong, healthy woman, but at the age of 85, she was stricken down of cholera and died. Aunt Joanna Fish died of the same disease seven hours before mother. This was over thirty years ago.

The contractor on the canal for whom I worked had another job about seven miles below Chillicothe. He engaged some of his best men to go down there and work thru the winter. I was one of the number. I received eleven dollars a month and a good board. We breakfasted by candle light and quit work after sundown. I was in my twentieth year and well and strong. After having been there a short time, I heard that the man against whom I held the note for eighteen dollars had opened a job one half mile below where I worked. I soon made him a call and presented my note. He had a clothing store, so I took one third of the value of the note in clothes and he paid the rest in money.

I saved every cent I could that winter, hiring my washing done but doing my mending. The month of June found me still at work. The weather was getting very warm and I had been away from home about eight months, and, finding that I had about seventy dollars, I concluded that I would return to Brooklyn. I started on foot, went to Lancaster Bank and had my money changed for silver. This was quite heavy. I had in the lot about thirty-five frank pieces. After going a little beyond Lancaster, I went into some bushes. I took my clothes out of my satchel, did up my money in one of my shirts and stowed it away in the bottom of my satchel. I then packed in the rest of the clothes in on top. I saved out money enough to pay my expenses home. I had a long journey before me ere I could reach Brooklyn. One day I traveled about forty miles. When I arrived at home, I found friends generally well. I went to my old stopping place, Ebenezer Fish's.

My friends wanted to know how much I earned in the six months that I had been gone, and they were surprised to learn that I had nearly \$70. I wanted to leave it with Uncle Ebenezer. He said that I could, but must run my own risk. He had not seen so much money in a great while. It remained with him until I bought a piece of land.

Sally was married two or three years before this and was now living in Richfield. I went there to make her a visit. While there, I learned that they wanted to have a well dug. They said they would pay me a good price if I found water. But if I found no water, then no pay. I went to work, but could find no water, so that all I received for my pains was my board.

After this, M. Pixley wanted me to stay one half month and clear off his fallow for wheat and he would give me for pay a two year old steer. I did so, and when the work was done, I drove the steer to Brooklyn. I hired Daniel to keep him, then went to Ebenezer Fish's and told him what I had done. He said he had a mate for my steer that he would let me have for six dollars, and I could pay him in work. He had some large chestnut trees near that gully where I.W. Fish lives, which he wanted me to work up into rails. I cut and split enough of this timber at 31 ¼ cents per hundred to pay for my steer. I then put the two steers together and soon found that I had nothing on which to keep them thru the winter. It was some time in Aug. and people were all thru haying, but I saw that there were a great many patches between the legs that had been left uncut. I obtained liberty to cut these patches and soon had hay enough to keep my steers thru.

During the winter season then, Brooklyn times were very dull. We could not get scarcely any money for work but had to take our pay mostly in trade. I soon saw that I had made a great mistake in leaving the Sciota Valley. What was best to do that winter, I could not determine. I took six acres of wood to chop. This wood was on the piece of land owned by the late A. Clarke and on the Greenwood St. property of Wm. Prescott, and it ran back to I.W. Fish's land. I cut the soft timber into steamboat wood, four feet in length. I drew it off the land and piled it up and sold it to Able Hinckley for 30 ¼ cents a cord. He came three miles with oxen and drew it off to Cleveland where he sold it for a dollar and a quarter a cord. This was the best I could do this winter.

Daniel lost one of his steers that winter and I bought the old one. In the spring, I bought a mate for it. I then owned two yoke of steers.

This was the spring that Alexander Ingham, wife and son closed their visit to Ohio. I have spoken of the place that he had already bought and the preparations he had made to build in the fall. When he returned in the fall, he wanted to get more land. There were about fifty acres of timber land in the east part of this quarter section, which was owned by two of the Brainards, which they wanted to sell<sup>11</sup>. Ingham and I agreed to take this land. He taking the south side and I the north side of Newburgh St. I had 19 acres for which I paid \$5.25 per acre. Ingham took the money east with him and paid for the land, and on his return, brought me a deed<sup>12</sup>. I then bought about 28 acres of bottom

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<sup>11</sup> LOT 74 - 1831 Brainard heirs to Ingham, Alex (48 acres east side of Lot 74)

<sup>12</sup> LOT 74 - 1845 Ingham, Alexander to Foster, Ebenezer (16 acres of Lot 74)

land joining the other on the east of Judge Barber.<sup>13</sup> I now had 44 acres of good land, but the last piece was not paid for.

Soon after I bought my first piece of land, I cleared off a small piece on which I set an orchard. In the spring, I built a barn. I worked out mostly by the month, but some by the day, hiring my board. I worked on my place a good deal at night, clearing and making fences. All of my spare time was employed in hauling logs to the mill, which were worked up into lumber for a house. After I got my lumber, I piled it up to season. I then obtained some pine lumber and hired Joshua Whitney to work it into doors. In a few months, I had my house up and painted outside and in. All this time, my spare time and nights were spent enlarging my clearing. I bought a span of yearling colts and I had to fence a pasture on the side hill to keep them in. I was now in my twenty-third year. I left off working on my place and went to work for Alexander Ingham by the month. While there that spring, Almon Williams and his sister Almira came out to visit their brother Joseph. In a short time, Almira and I became acquainted, and were married on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of Jan. We went to keeping house and, as our means were small, we bought but a few necessary things at first, but with these few things we were happy and contented in our new home. I bought a new milch cow, some hens and a pig, and having just broken my colts, I had a good team. I kept on cutting wood and clearing my land as fast as I could. In due time we had a daughter born, whom we named Diana. She came only on an angel visit, for she had only been with us nine months and ten days when the Lord saw fit to take her to himself. He says, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of Heaven." I expect to meet her with the redeemed in Heaven. I also expect to meet Howard<sup>14</sup> there, and a great company that have gone up from Brooklyn - parents, brothers, sisters, kindred and friends. This reminds me of a lesson that I read this morning. A disciple spoke to his Master and said, "behold my mother" and the Master said, "He that doeth the will of my Father, the same is my mother, sister and brother." We must learn to do the will of my Heavenly Father while on earth, if we would enjoy the company of the redeemed ones in Heaven. Our Savior said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all (necessary) things shall be added to you."

In due time, the Lord gave me five children, three boys and two girls, who grew up to womanhood and manhood. About two years after we were married, I had a fall on the ice, which broke a blood vessel in the lower part of my body. This left me in a very weak state. It was almost three years before I could do much work. You can imagine, perhaps, what I had to pass thru that we might support our little family and pay a heavy doctor bill, with one piece of land unpaid for. I found I had not strength enough to drive my team of young colts. Horses were selling at a very low price at this time, and I sold one of my colts for thirty-five dollars. I traded the other for a large stout, kind horse with which I did most of my work for about three years.

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<sup>13</sup> LOT 83 - 1839 Barber, Josiah to Foster, Ebenezer (27 acres of Lot 83)

<sup>14</sup> Howard is Ebenezer Foster's grandson who died in 1877.



I began to get more strength, so I bought two wild steers and broke them to work. I drew wood to Cleveland for a while, then turned them toward paying for my place. I soon bought more and broke them. Before I received a deed for my last piece of land, I had paid considerable interest money, and turned over towards the payment, four good horses and three yoke of cattle.

Before I had fully paid for this land, I took up a lot in Ohio City (Cleveland) near the Circle, for which I agreed to pay \$700. I took this land, thinking that it would raise in value, but it was a very bad move for me. I let this debt run until the principle and interest amounted to \$1200 or more. The value of the lots in Ohio City fell to almost nothing. My lot was not worth \$200. I found that it was going to take all we were worth to pay this debt, and I began to fear we should lose our little home for which we had worked so many years. Old Mr. Edwin Foot was a true friend of mine, and I got him to see Barber and Lord, who were the land agents, to find what they could do for me. The best they could do was to take back the lot and I pay them \$500, with interest from date, paying \$100 yearly. I accepted this offer and gave them a note. I had to work this out, which seemed like paying for a dead horse.

I began to be encouraged and hoped, if spared, we might, in a few years, pay this debt and be able to save our little home. My health improved slowly and in twelve years, the principle and interest were paid. This experience taught me what a mis-step will do in our short lives. I feel that it was the hand of the Almighty that brought me thru that furnace of affliction, and I will say "Praise the Lord for His goodness unto me." Praise the Lord, I am once more out of debt. I raised a good many peaches and apples and other things, and, in a few years, besides supporting my family, I had laid about \$800 away. Finding that our house was too small for our family, in 1856, I began to get lumber, stone and block for a house. I stuck up the lumber so that it would get thoroughly seasoned. In the fall of 1859, I put in the cellar, and in the fall of 1860, I put up the house and partly furnished it. We moved into it late that fall and, I think, completed and furnished in 1862 or 1863.

From 1862 to 1885, our history is well known among our children and kindred friends. I commenced writing Jan. 1, 1880 and finished it Feb. 20, 1885.

———— Ebenezer Foster

- A. Clarke..... 15  
 Ague..... 13  
 Akins' land..... 10  
 Barber..... 17  
 Belden ..... 10  
 Billings ..... 2  
   Nathan..... 3  
   Sarah (Mrs Foster).....2, 3  
 Bliss, Mayor ..... 5  
 Booth, Emily (Ingham)..... 6  
 Boyden  
   Eben ..... 13  
   Eunice (Fish)..... 13  
   John..... 13  
 Brainard..... 5  
   Cranford ..... 5  
   Mrs. J.C..... 11  
   Osias (Mrs.)..... 8  
   Seth..... 12  
 Calvin College..... 6  
 Canal..... 13, 14  
 Chester  
   Eveline (Fish) ..... 14  
   Harriet .....8, 9  
   Simeon..... 7  
 Cholera .....6, 14  
 Cleveland  
   Brighton..... 10  
   Holmden Ave..... 7  
   Ridge Road..... 10  
 Connecticut ..... 5, 6, 7  
   Billing's Pond ..... 2  
   Billings Mill..... 3  
   Fort Hill..... 4  
   Groton..... 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 14  
   Ledyard..... 3  
   Mystic..... 3, 4, 13  
   North Stonington ... 1, 2, 7  
   Norwich ..... 3  
   Pendleton Hill ..... 2  
   Pequanarch ..... 4  
   Preston City..... 3  
   Stonington..... 13  
 Corbin, Eliza (Ingham)..... 6  
 Curtiss  
   James Milton..... 12  
   Milton ..... 11, 12  
 Davis.....2, 14  
 Edwards.....3, 4  
 Eldridge..... 13  
 Fever ..... 9, 11, 12, 13  
 Fish  
   Abigail (Mrs. Foster).....3, 6  
   Daniel4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13,  
   14, 15  
   Ebenezer Jr.4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,  
   10, 11, 12, 14, 15  
   Ebenezer Sr..... 3, 5, 6  
   Eunice (Mrs Boyden)..... 13  
   Eveline (Mrs Chester) .....8  
   Hannah (Mrs Fowels) .... 10  
   I.W. .... 5, 15  
   Isaiah W.....7  
   James..... 5, 6  
   John .....4, 7  
   Jonathan.....4  
   Joseph..... 4, 5  
   Leonard .....6  
   Lorenzo .....7  
   Lydia ..... 13  
   Matilda..... 12  
   Moses.....5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12  
   Ozias.....7  
   Professor Eben.....6  
 Foot, Edwin .....9, 17  
 Forest St.....7  
 Foster  
   Abigail (Fish) .. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6,  
   7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14,  
   16  
   Denison.....2  
   Diana ..... 16  
   Ebenezer..... 11  
   (buys land) ..... 16  
   (travels).....13, 14  
   Eveline (Mrs.Foot)..... 11  
   George 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14  
   Jonathan.....2  
   Leonard..... 11  
   Lydia .....3  
   Michael B. ...2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8,  
   9, 10, 11, 13  
   Nancy ..... 9, 10, 11, 12  
   Nathan ..... 3, 10, 11, 13  
   Sally..... 10, 11, 12, 15  
   Thomas .....2  
 Fuller ..... 10, 11, 12  
 Gallop .....6  
 Gates, Jerry.....9  
 Gay's pond.....7  
 Gilmore ..... 11  
 Hinckley, Abel ..... 15  
 Hudson ..... 13  
 Indians .....5  
 Ingham  
   Alexander.6, 12, 13, 14, 15,  
   16  
   W.A. ....6  
 Jones..... 10  
 Judge Barber ..... 9, 10, 11, 16  
 Mane/Main .....2  
   Jonathan .....2  
   Thomas .....2  
 Methodist Church .....7  
 Molbren.....2  
 Morgan .....6  
 New York .....13  
   Albany.....13  
   Buffalo .....6, 8, 13  
   Genesee.....2  
   Schenectady.....13  
 Occupation  
   carpenter .....2  
   tailor .....2  
 Ohio... 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13,  
 14, 15, 17  
   Brooklyn4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11,  
   12, 13, 14, 15, 16  
   Brooklyn Village .. 4, 5, 6, 7  
   Chillicothe .....14  
   Cleveland.6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13,  
   15, 17  
   Greenwood St.....15  
   Newburgh St. ....9  
   Ohio City .....17  
   Lancaster .....14  
   Newburgh..... 5, 6, 7, 15  
   Ridgeville.....11  
   Richfield ..... 11, 15  
   Bangs Corners   11  
   Strongsville..... 10, 11  
 Pennsylvania.....2  
 Pepes' .....11  
 Pixley.....5, 11, 12, 15  
   Leonard .....5  
 Pixley's .....12  
 Prescott .....15  
 Reeves' house .....10  
 Rhode Island  
   Watch Hill .....2, 3, 14  
 Scotland.....2  
 Stanton  
   Joanna .....6  
   Joanna (Mrs.Fish) .....14  
 Storer.....11  
 Trowbridge  
   Seymore.....5  
 Wade House .....5  
 Whitney, Joshua .....16  
 Wilkinson .....11  
 Williams  
   Almira (Mrs Foster) .....16  
   Almon .....16  
   Joseph.....12  
 York.....2

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<sup>i</sup> Susan Main.