

THE
LAUFFER HISTORY.

A Genealogical chart of the descendents of
CHRISTIAN LAUFFER,
the Pioneer, with a few biographical sketches.

SEPTEMBER, 1905.

"There is a solidarity in human
nature, making those that follow,
a unity with those that precede."



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Bartol also had daughters, and a son Henry. The latter moved to Tuscarora, near Philadelphia. The source of our information is this: In the fall of 1824 John Lauffer, Jr., of Harrison City, the centenarian, and Frederick Steck, the father of Daniel Steck, a former sheriff of Westmoreland Co., went afoot to Philadelphia with a drove of 170 cattle that were purchased in the Manor Valley at from \$10 to \$12 per head.

It took five weeks to make the trip. John Lauffer, Jr., on this trip visited Henry, the son of Bartol, and saw his sons and daughters.

Part of our information of the Christian Lauffer branch we derive from John Lauffer, the centenarian. In his earlier days he described his trip into Ohio thus: "On the 1st of November, 1826, in company with Col. Paul Brinker, I took a steamboat at Pittsburg for Cincinnati. We arrived at the latter place at the end of three days. A day or two later we started afoot for Dayton, Ohio, thence to Chillicothe, thence to Pickaway Co., to visit among the Teegardens, near St. Paul, Ohio, who had been pioneer settlers in Westmoreland Co. After visiting a week among old-time friends and relatives, the journey was resumed to Columbus, thence to Wooster, Cleveland and Canton, stopping with friends along the way. From Canton to Runley, a village on the Tuscaroras River, thence to Steubenville by way of Harmony, and thence by way of Beaver Falls to Pittsburg. The whole journey occupying about six weeks."

VI. John Lauffer, Jr., son of John, Sr., son of Christian, the Pioneer, was born Jan. 26, 1803. He is the sixth in a family of fourteen and for equipoise and longevity has surpassed all the other Lauffers. He was a man of geniality and of a cheerful, amiable disposition. He was a patriarch in our family, and being a grand-son of our common ancestor, Christian Lauffer, and having all his life taken a lively interest in the affairs of all branches of the Lauffer family, he held a position of undisputed primacy.

The travels of his earlier years are related elsewhere in this history. He drove a team to Philadelphia several times before he was twenty-one, and could relate interesting stories of the stage coach days. In these trips East he crossed the mountains at three different places, namely, via Greensburg and Harrisburg, via Bedford and via Blairsville. In his own words: "I had been with a drover. He sold out at Norristown, then I went on to Philadelphia, to see the ships with sails. That is how I got down there. I had seen the steam boats at Pittsburg, but I wanted to see the sail ships that go on the ocean. I was twenty-two years old at that time."

In describing this journey he said: "We took the Greensburg Pike through Bedford. Another time we took the Northern Pike. We always walked home again. People are not so foolish nowadays, they do not walk so much. You get used to it. It is not harder than if you worked. It took a good bit of time going. Coming back we were allowed three days for one hundred miles. We got 60c a day for expenses and 30c a day from the drover as wages, besides having expenses paid. Going down we went about fifteen miles a day, just as it would suit to stop."

When asked how much money he made on such a trip, requiring six weeks, he said: "I was a pretty good walker and could cover more than 100 miles in three days. So I got some of the money allowed me for expenses. I cleared \$9 or \$10 on a trip." Quite a modest wage, according to our present standards of value!

On the Christmas before his death, when asked to again tell something of this trip into Ohio, he said: "Col. Paul Brink-

er and I took a notion to see Ohio. We had friends scattered all over the state. In the fall of the year when the buckwheat was thrashed and the corn in, we took a notion to see the country and visit our friends. We took the boat at Pittsburg for Cincinnati. We walked 400 miles or more. At Columbus we visited the Christ Lauffer people and the Teegardens who owned this land here, and had moved out from Greensburg. We were gone about six weeks. We went in October and got back in December before the snow came. We thought we had seen a good deal."

When asked again of the Peter Lauffer people, he said: "My Uncle Peter was about 15 years older than my father. He was a farmer by occupation, and a shoemaker by trade. He made shoes for Washington's army. He lived twelve miles from East Town (Easton) and five miles from the Blue Ridge. There is better land between East Town and Philadelphia than my Uncle Peter owned. He attended church at Stone Church, three miles from his home. I was there. John Naleigh, a brother of the Naleighs here in the Manor Valley that I knew, owned land that joined Uncle Peter's farm. I visited him and he was glad to see me. A line fence separated John Naleigh's farm from Uncle Peter's farm."

When asked how he felt that Christmas day he said: "I don't feel as good in my legs as I used to. My legs are so weak. My mind is good enough if I was only other ways as good." He died of senile gangrene of both extremities, and the arterial changes that were bringing it on, were evidently at work then already.

When asked about the role his father played in the Indian wars he said: "Several families were murdered by the Indians on Baver Run. Captain Bonner lived near Mt. Pleasant. He gathered up twenty or forty militia men and went in pursuit. The Indians escaped. The British hired the Indians. My father was drafted in the War of '12. He did not go. He sent a substitute. That was the summer mother was sick, and died of cancer, and it did not suit him to go. I was nine years old then. I can remember it well."

Of business enterprises, apart from farming, he conducted many in the years of his physical vigor. In 1834 he built a saw mill which was rebuilt in 1851. The log yard was located where the public school building at Harrison City now stands. In 1840 he and his brother Seth built a steam grist mill about one-half mile northeast of Harrison City. A race was constructed too and part of the time this mill was operated by water power. The saw mill was run by water power. The log yard was where the Harrison City school house now stands. Both mills are now torn down.

In his youth the site of Harrison City was a dense thicket. He and John C. Rankin named and laid out that town. It was named in honor of William Henry Harrison, "Old Tippecanoe," and the plan of the town bears date of Nov. 3, 1840. The land south of Main street belonged to John C. Rankin, at an earlier date to Jacob Walthour, and north of Main street to John Lauffer.

John Lauffer, Jr., enjoys the distinction of having voted in twenty presidential elections. In the recent presidential election, he walked to the polls unaided, and even without a cane. He entered the booth alone, and marked his own ballot without the aid of glasses, owing to the excellence of his second sight. He voted for all the presidents from John Quincy Adams up to McKinley. Harrison, Jackson and Lincoln were his favorites, he helped elect all three. In the recent election (1903) he voted the Prohibition ticket. He resented the administration's Philippine policy. In the Prohibition propaganda of 1857 he became a total abstainer himself, and ceased using whiskey in the harvest field, as was customary in those days. He was five feet, six inches in height and weighed 145 pounds. In the vigor of his early manhood he weighed considerably more. He had dark hair and blue eyes.

His mental vigor was retained to an unusual degree, and the tenacity of his memory was remarkable. He seemed to have forgotten nothing. And even at Christmas, 1903, was much interested in contemporary events. He attributed the fullness of

his years and his continued good health to his temperate habits. For more than thirty years, he followed no active pursuit in life, and chose a golden medium in his living. He was a venerable man and many traveled far to converse with him. He reached the century milestone with his mind clear and faculties unimpaired. It was agreeable to talk to so cheerful an old man, who could recall the War of 1812 and talked of Jackson and his victories, as events occurring when he was a boy. The Indian raids upon the early settlers were fresh in his mind, he could remember the Wilderness north of Pittsburg (Armstrong Co.) where deer abounded in his youth, and he could relate the events of the Mexican and Civil wars with great exactness. Until shortly before his death he devoted several hours each day to reading papers, books and the Bible.

He was a devout man, and was a life-long member of the Reformed church which he attended regularly and in which he took great interest. Profanity, liquor, and other vices of the vulgar, he was free from. He ate heartily, slept well, and even when quite old and feeble was not burdensome to himself or others. In his later years he made his home with his daughter Lucy, Mrs. Klingensmith, who is an excellent housekeeper, and fondly cared for him in sickness and in health.

His first marriage was to Esther Brinker May 3, 1827. She was a daughter of Jacob Brinker and was born Nov. 24, 1808, and died July 21, 1849. She was the mother of twelve children.

John Lauffer, Jr., was married a second time to Mrs. Mary Bear, nee Buchman, Feb. 12, 1853. It was since the death of the latter that he made his home with his daughter Lucy.

John Lauffer, Jr., died Jan. 14, 1904, aged 100 years, 11 months and 19 days. Interred at Denmark Manor Cemetery. The funeral sermon was preached by Rev. J. F. Snyder, of Salina, in the Reformed Church at Harrison City. His theme was the Heavenly Home and his text from John's Gospel 14:2-3. It was the largest funeral ever seen in that part of the country, and one of the most able sermons ever listened to by the people of Harrison City: "In the Heavenly Home there is room enough for all who will come. Like in the parable of the Great Supper, after

the servants gather in all they could find, it was reported there still is room. There are many mansions. It is an assured Home. No child of God will ever be disappointed. 'If it were not so I would have told you.' St. Paul declares, 'For we know if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.'"

Rev. Snyder was assisted by Rev. Deiner and Rev. Noss. The church was so packed that many were unable to gain admission.