

MEMOIRS

.... OF

PHAREZ G. WALDO

BORN OCT. 23, 1835

I HAVE been in this earth life almost eighty-seven years and now that you have asked me for a few reminiscences of those short years I don't know where to begin.

The earliest records of the Waldo family date from Peter Waldo, of Lyons, France. The Waldo family in America was founded by Cornelius Waldo, who was born about 1624 in England, and died Jan. 3, 1700, at Chelmsford, Mass. The descendants of this man are closely interwoven in the life of early New England. In Maine is Waldo County, named for Brig. Gen'l Samuel Waldo, whose painted portrait may be seen on the walls of Bowdoin College.

Down through the succeeding years they have come gradually moving westward until some of the descendants may be found in every state in the Union.

I was born Oct. 23, 1835, on West Owego Creek, Tioga Co., N. Y. Ten or twelve years later I saw my Grandfather Waldo making that entry of my birth in the family Bible while Father and Mother gave him the dates. We were then living at President, Pa.

From West Owego we moved to Hooper's Valley on the east bank of the Susquehanna, where there were mills; saw mills, stave mill, grist mill, cloth-dressing mill and machine shop, all run by water-power made by a dam which was built so that a raft or boat could go over it.

The staves made at this mill were sawed out of oak block then run through a planer and loaded into boats called "Arks." These "Arks" were in the shape of a capital letter "A" at each end and when loaded with these staves were run down the river to tide water and put on board whaling vessels to make oil barrels to hold the whale oil. A cooper went with each whaler and built the barrels as they were needed on the voyage.

The first teacher that I had here at Hooper's Valley was a man by the name of Appleton Kelley and as my mind's eye turns back the pages of Time I can see him as though it were yesterday instead of eighty-one long years ago.

I know now that he was unusually well-educated as compared with the average man who taught in those times.

He taught mathematics and astronomy to the older pupils, having a full set of geometrical blocks which he had made himself also a model of the planets arranged on a stand and by

turning a crank they were made to revolve around the sun which was a yellow ball larger than the rest.

He had a magnifying glass also which his older pupils used a great deal and once he permitted us smaller children to look into it. As I didn't know what I was looking for I, of course, saw nothing.

I well remember a spring freshet here at Hooper's Valley. The river was a wild one, full of floating ice, sweeping lumber piles, logs, everything before it. In the midst of the excitement along came an old "Ark" with two Irishmen in it who had thought to save it as it came past the point where they were grading for the new R. R.

I can remember the excitement and how those great cakes of ice would turn up on edge, completely hiding men and "Ark" and can yet hear their yelling above the grind. Below the bridge the ice crushed the craft in two but they were both in one end and not far below the pieces were driven ashore and the men rescued.

Mother told me that she counted sixteen piles of lumber floating by in sight of our house at one time. This would be a total loss to the owners for such a thing as salvaging after floods was unknown and this lumber was all clear pine, finer than anything cut in this section today.

About this time Grandmother Waldo died and Grandfather persuaded Father and Mother to come and live at the old home and keep house for him.

Father had been very sick just previous to this and a neighbor by the name of Mrs. Comstock had taken me to her home and there is where I got my first taste of honey. A brother of Mrs. Comstock called me into the pantry and there stood a great tub of honey. He spread a slice of bread with it, all of two inches thick and gave it to me. Isn't it strange that nothing tastes as it did 80 years ago.

When Mrs. Comstock took me home she gave me a red rocking chair. I well remember one Sunday all the family went to church, but Grandfather and me. I was sitting in the little rocking chair while Grandfather was walking back and forth across the kitchen floor. Finally Grandfather said, "Pharez, you must sit still, you are making too much noise." I sat still and began trying to figure out whether my rocking chair or Grand-

father's boots made the most noise and haven't it settled in my mind to this day.

From Hooper's Valley we moved to Burlington, Bradford Co., where Father was to stock a saw mill.

When Father came here he had a horse and buggy and Father's brother and a neighbor were going to come to the Allegheny River, follow it down and when they found a place which suited them make a bargain for the land.

Father gave them the horse and buggy and told them to trade it for a piece of land. They did so and got one hundred acres from the Mays family who were located at Tionesta.

This piece of land they bought lay about five miles from Tionesta in what is now the Wagner Settlement in Red Brush.

In the spring of '42, Father yoked up the oxen, hitched them to a lumber wagon loaded with household goods and started for this Red Brush home.

He reached Tionesta about the first of June and went out to this one-hundred acre tract, cutting roads and experiencing great difficulty in getting there with his load.

He built a log house and barn, turned the oxen loose to forage and started back on foot for Mother and us children.

He put us into a two horse wagon, Mother, Polly, who was the baby, Lucy, Edward, DeWitt and myself, seven of us all told and we fared forth (as we said then) into the West.

We came from Bradford Co. through the northern tier of counties to the River. One night in particular I remember, on Sunday, we stopped five miles above Warren on the bank of the Allegheny, starting the next morning at daylight and had to cross the river.

The team forded but Father borrowed a canoe to take the family across.

The man from whom he borrowed had two canoes, both being made of hollowed out logs. Father took the smaller one to take us over in and I stood up in the canoe and leaned against the side to gaze into the water with no danger of falling out so you may know it was not a very small craft.

We drove on down to Warren and went to the Hotel for something to eat. There was nothing to be had at the Inn, but a few griddle cakes, "flap-jacks" the innkeeper called them, made of corn meal.

The river was very low and had been for so long that the keel boats could not get up that far and the town was almost starved out.

Father tried to buy a loaf or two of bread from private families but with no success. Mother, however, had a lot of home-made crackers in the wagon and we ate those.

We drove down the river, through Tidioute, which at that time was a bit of cleared land at the mouth of McGuire Run. We stayed here all night and the next day we made the journey to Tionesta, fifteen miles through the woods, fording the river at the mouth of West Hickory.

We stayed all night at Samuel Hunter's whose wife was a sister of Mrs. Towner's, old settlers in this region.

Bears were very plentiful at this time and one made us a visit the first night we landed in our new home.

A week or so later a young man by the name of Alvin Robinson came with our two cows and a "bear dog."

He had started with a fine shepherd dog that Father had and in stopping one night at a farm house had been persuaded to trade the shepherd dog for a splendid bear dog which the farmer had and which the farmer told him would be just the thing for the wilderness.

He arrived with the dog all right and the first night a bear came to the cabin to get pork rinds which were in a barrel under the house. The dog rushed out to see about it, the bear made a dive for the dog, the dog made a dive for under the house, striking his head against the sills with such loud thumps that it woke the family. The young man never heard the last of his trade for a "bear dog."

In 1844 we came to what is now President, where Father ran a grist mill for Robert Elliott. In 1845, I think it was, Ralph Clapp came there and bought a large property from the Elliott Brothers, Robert, Sanderson and George. Sanderson Elliott had a saw mill, George was a shoemaker and also had a small tannery in connection with his shoe shop. He was about one year in tanning a hide but it was the best kind of leather when he got it finished.

The elder Clapp built a furnace and Father went to work for him as his Superintendent. The furnace was supplied with ore dug on the hills near President but it was of poor quality.

The fuel used was charcoal made on the hills where there was

plenty of lumber. They made a fairly good iron but it cost too much to get the material in shape to manufacture it.

Ralph Clapp was a noted M. E. preacher. When he went to Pittsburgh to sell iron or get supplies the church people inserted a notice in the papers that the Rev. Ralph Clapp would hold services in such and such a church and that church would be packed to the doors and many turned away.

Rev. Clapp was Supt. of the Sunday School at President and had a way of awakening much interest in the meetings.

At one time he told the school that he would give a Bible to the one who committed to memory in a quarter of a year, the greatest number of verses from the Bible.

Three of us entered the contest: Miss Cynthia Hamilton, J. M. Clapp and myself. Miss Hamilton got the Bible as she had several hundred more verses than John M. and he had a few more than I.

Miss Hamilton married a minister and died in Kansas City. J. M. Clapp died several years ago a very wealthy man.

His brother, Edwin E. started him in the oil business at a time when fortunes were won and lost over night. He won a fortune and kept it.

E. E. Clapp became the owner of the President property, some ten thousand acres and at one time the Standard Oil Co. offered him \$375,000.00 for this undeveloped block but he asked \$125,000.00 more.

About '48 or '49, Dennis Smith, Elias Farmer and Clark Waldo, (my father,) bought from Thomas McCalmont the property at the mouth of Stewart's Run, where Baum Station now stands. This property of about 200 acres had on it an old log grist mill which they built over, then Smith sold his right to the others and they built a saw mill half a mile farther up the run, where I, as a boy, put in many days with an oxtteam, hauling logs to the mill off the hill and from the mouth of Pine Hollow, where there was a fine stand of pine lumber. I hauled all the logs to the mill and the lumber to the river, where it was rafted and floated out. Some of it was sold in Franklin and some of it John McCrea ran down to Kittanning and sold.

I was given a fine "float" of boards at this time, I suppose "seconds," but which today would be worth 75 or 80 dollars a thousand and I traded it to Ben McKay for an old rifle. I made

a stock for it out of maple, then traded the rifle for an old bull's eye watch, finally trading the watch for a drawing knife and some miserable scalawag stole the knife from me.

We were living then in a house that Farmer built at the mouth of Stewart's Run, Baum now, since burned down. My step-father, Bob Hyner sold this place for \$8,000.00 He could have had \$30,000.00 just as well as \$8,000.00, but in those days \$8,000.00 represented a lot more than it does today.

Of the old settlers along the river in this vicinity at the time Old Judge Holeman was one of the finest. His farm was at Holeman Flats, between Baum and Tionesta and in addition to much level land on shore there were islands in the river which were very productive.

Judge Holeman raised considerable grain for those times and a neighbor going to him for a few bushels of wheat was sure to get it. He would stroke the half bushel measure, then reach to the pile of wheat with his two hands, (and they were good sized hands too) scoop up what they would hold and put it on top of this half-bushel.

If a neighbor said, "I haven't the money to pay for this today," the Judge would say, "All right, perhaps you can come and help the boys hoe corn for a few days."

During the oil excitement he sold this farm for \$60,000.00, getting one-half cash in gold coin, a life lease of the house and garden as well as a mortgage on the property. He finally received the rest of the money in gold bearing bonds. He raised a fine, substantial set of boys and girls who are now "Over Beyond." Their names were Ashbel, Charles, Eli, John, Richard, Mrs. Jane Morrison, Mrs. Dale, Mrs. Betty Hunter, (Dr. Hunter's wife,) and Mrs. Cosgrove.

Judge Holeman was a hunter of note in the early days. He told me once how much game a pound of powder had got him. He was very saving of everything and I wish I could remember the number of bear and deer he told me he had killed with that pound of powder. I do know that it was more than I have ever seen in all my life.

I like to think back to those times of hard work and simple pleasures. When concrete roads and 60-horse power automobiles were not even dreamed of. When the sturdy youths thought nothing of walking twenty miles a day. When a day's work meant

from sun up to sun down and no unions or union wages.

The spring before my Father was taken sick and died he had gone to Franklin and bought wheat to be sent up on the first keel boat which came up the river.

I was seventeen years old, the river got very low, the keel boats couldn't run and as we had to have the wheat I had to go and get it.

I took the canoe, not like the present day toy and went to Franklin one afternoon to bring our grain.

I stayed all night at Kinnear's Hotel, and the next morning borrowed a wheel-barrow and it took several loads to get it down from Bleakley's store to the mouth of French Creek, where my canoe was tied up. By nine o'clock I was ready to start home—twenty-two miles up stream with a loaded boat.

At 4 o'clock I had got to Henry's Bend and stayed all night with the Henry's. As I remember it now the poling of that heavy boat for that first sixteen miles didn't even make me tired. If I was, it didn't make much of an impression on me.

When I was a boy ten or eleven years old the people of President and surrounding country organized a fishing party, dividing the men into two groups.

One crowd went to the lower end of the eddy at President and built a dam to keep the fish from going down the river. The other's went to the upper end of this eddy and built a brush seine.

Father was confined to his bed with rheumatism and so he told me that I would have to go with them and do what I could to help.

Some went to the woods and cut hickory saplings large enough to have holes bored through the butts and enough poles to reach across the river. The tops of the poles were twisted into a withe, passed through the hole in the butt of another pole and so on until there was enough to reach across the river. This was stretched along the beach above the deep water and brush brought from the woods was laid on this "back-bone." With this "back-bone" as a "starter" a great net was woven of hickory withes, most of the young fellows today would think it a long, hard job, but no one used to be afraid of work. Well, when it was finished a cable was attached to each end, one set of men towing it across the river by means of canoes—that was before the days of "John-boats" but it was a poor man indeed who didn't have a canoe. Today they

are the plaything of the well-to-do.

It always took a day to get ready and then in the morning of the day it was to be drawn everyone was there. Some one would bring a team of oxen to hitch on if the pulling was too much, men in canoes enough to extend entirely across the river, spears in hand to hold the net down flat to the bottom of the river and men pulling on the cables at each end. As the net was worked down through the eddy big fish would make their appearance. These big fellows would first go down to the dam at the foot of the eddy, then finding their way shut off would turn and come charging back. Some one would sight a big pike or "muskie" coming near the surface and make a splash at him with the pole, but they weren't so easily scared, and would make a rush for an open space between two men, leap across a canoe and away they would go.

They were hard to stop, for a spear driven into such a big fish would not hold and the motion of the fish through the air was so swift that when hit with a spear the chances were the man would be thrown out of his canoe, or he would break his spear handle.

When the net had been dragged down near the dam, having about an acre of water enclosed, it was stopped and stones piled on it to keep it in place, then the boss would call out "All right!"

You should have seen the fun and excitement at this stage of the game. Two, sometimes three men in each canoe, some standing on the net, some on the bank, others wading right in and picking out the fish. Fish jumping over the rock dam at the lower end, men spearing both in the air and in the water. After the fish were all killed they were taken to the gravel bar and there they were sorted, each kind in a heap by itself. Then a committee was appointed to divide them. The division usually was by estimating them but some times a very large pile had to be counted, one such that I watched them count had five hundred fish in it from one foot to three feet in length.

The committee made a pile for each man, wrote his name on a paper and placed him by his fish so there was never any trouble over the award.

The pile that fell to my father was of course passed to me, but there were so many and they were so heavy that a neighbor hauled them home for me.

Pike, salmon and bass were the best fish that we got. There are no salmon in the Allegheny now such as we used to get in those days. Those fish were so heavy bodied with bright scales.

Then there were the big "buffalo" suckers with shoulders six inches through. Many perch, spoonbill sturgeons, also rough backed sturgeon. One of this latter kind caught at Tionesta weighed 60 lbs.

Then a fish that we called a "fly-by-night," ran in schools, they were a broad, flat fish with a beautiful colored shine to their scales.

Two-tined spears were all that were used in those days. When a young man (just an occasional one would do so) would come to a fishing "bee" with a three-tined spear he would be met with such a shout as "Hurrah! here he comes with his hay fork." The real sportsman of these days would not use anything but the two-tined fork.

Hen. McCalmont could stand on the end of his spearing boat and throw his spear twenty feet and nail a fish to the bottom of the river. The fish when it was hit wasn't lying on the bottom of the river waiting for the spear either.

Another old hunter of Venango Co. was Uncle James Ricketts, who lived on Pithole Creek at Woods' Mill.

The Old Settler got most of his meat in the woods and they could go out any day and get a bear or a deer. Ricketts told me of having killed ten deer in one day.

Panthers and wolves were very numerous too and the hunters knew the location of every wolf den.

Every spring they went to the dens and got the young cubs on which a nice bounty was paid. The mother wolf was never harmed and any man who was mean enough to kill another man's she-wolf was looked down on in the community—just as grave an offense as to shoot a cow.

The regular hunters of the neighborhood knew where each man's den was located and never molested it.

It was a poor community indeed in those days which was without its witches and witchcraft and away back in the late forties Uncle Ricketts' home was under the spell of the "evil eye." When Grandma McCalmont, my wife's mother was a girl she and her sister went to Ricketts' to spend the day. They laid their bonnets on the bed off the parlor and when they were ready to

go home they found their bonnets cut into ribbons.

At another time Aunt Ricketts had scoured a skein of yarn getting it ready for knitting, walked to the door and tossed it into the branches of a tree which hung low over the back steps. When she went out afterwards she found her entire skein of yarn cut into bits.

Meat hanging in the smoke house was found cut in chips on the floor. Uncle Ricketts was one day preparing to go away and Aunt laid his best broadcloth suit out on the bed for him to put on. When Uncle picked them up they were cut in strips.

Finally suspicion pointed to a man by the name of Sowers, as being the one who had cast the "spell" on the Ricketts' home. At the point of a gun Uncle Ricketts compelled Sowers to say: "May God bless you and yours forever." Shortly after this Sowers left the country and that ended the spell of the "evil eye."

At this time the lowlands along the river were the sites of many Indian villages. The Hickory Town flats, those at Tionesta and below Baum on the lands now owned by the Morris family, on all the islands which were very much larger then than now, all have many arrow heads and Indian relics buried in the soft loam which is turned up by the plow every spring.

The rivers teemed with fish, the woods with wild game and wild fowl and the soil was so easily worked in these bottoms that the life of the Indian was a wonderfully easy one and they were very numerous.

It is a good ways back though to the time of the Indian occupation of these flats.

My father-in-law, James McCalmont, told me that when his father, Thomas McCalmont built the old grist mill at the mouth of Stewart's Run that in helping his father dig the mill race he had unearthed a man's bones which showed evidence of having been killed by an Indian. Whether Indian or white man's bones, he didn't know.

This must have been more than 125 years ago that the bones were found and they had been there many years before that.

At this time Tom Haworth from Pithole bought a tract of oak timber on Long Ridge, near Stewart's Run. He asked the neighbors to help build some bridges over the run and Father McCalmont was one of those who was helping.

He and one of the Haworth boys were cutting stringers for

the bridge when a tree lodged, then sprung and struck Mr. McCalmont, injuring him fatally, and he lived but two hours.

A giant of a man in strength and stature, one of Nature's noblemen. He always had a kind word for everyone and no one ever asked a favor of him in vain.

A strange coincidence in connection with Father McCalmont's death happened to me. Some time before the accident I had a very vivid dream about Father McCalmont. I dreamed I was walking down the hill to Stewart's Run. I saw in my dream the place McCalmont was hurt and him lying there. He raised up his hands to me and said: "My God, Phade, can't you help me?" and I awoke in a great agony of mind. The day he was injured when I got to him he reached out his hands to me, just as in my vision and said: "My God, Phade, can't you help me?" "Coming events cast their shadows before" so they say.

Then there was Moses Pierson, a neighbor of Judge Holeman's who was a most interesting man—a veteran of the War of 1812, also an old keel boatman who used to bring keel boats from New Orleans to Pittsburgh. He was an interesting figure and I wish I could tell the pioneer stories as he told them to me.

In 1856, I went to work in Pine Grove Twp. building houses and barns. On June 10th of that year when we got up in the morning all vegetation was frozen. The grass was frozen so hard that it cracked like sticks as one walked through it.

This made hard times in the country. One man scoured the country over buying all the seed buckwheat that he could then put the price up to 5 dollars a bushel.

Another man by the name of Crawford, who lived at Emlenton bought all that he could get, then sent word around the country that those who needed seed might come and get it from him and then in the fall they could pay him back what they had borrowed. You can see that there was a difference in men even in those days.

After this I built a barn for John McCrea and another for Isaac Caldron, of Ten Mile Bottom. This last barn was forty feet by sixty feet and there were forty sticks in it, forty ft. in length, all oak.

We boarded with Caldron, who lived in a story and a half log house a window in each end and the stove-pipe from the kitchen came up near the foot of our bed.

This bed had two fine goose feather ticks on it and we'd sweat all day hewing our oak timber and get into this bed and sweat all night with our ticks—one over us and one under us.

That was the year of the Buchanan and Fremont campaign and politics was as hot as the weather was, and it was a terrible hot, dry summer.

The man I worked with was for Buchanan and I was for Fremont. The Fugitive Slave law was being put into effect then and feeling ran very high. The present generation little knows what times those were. In the fall of '56 I took a contract to go up in the pine woods on Hickory Creek to take out lumber for the Pittsburgh market.

We worked all winter and had the lumber on the Creek, two miles from the river by spring, then it had to be driven down the creek on the spring freshets to the river.

There were two mill ponds on the Creek and we had to cut a channel through the ice on the ponds so we could get the logs out on the flood. The banks were lined with monstrous hemlocks standing so thick that the sun couldn't thaw the ponds by the first or middle of April. Different winters in the "old times" than we have these days.

Driving the logs was a "man's job." Often a big log would stick on a rock in mid-stream when in you'd go, roll it off and repeat this all day. At dark, wet, cold, hungry we would walk to the home shanty or go to Hicks Prather's and get down by the fireplace to dry up all we could, eat a big supper and breakfast and be at the "drive" again by daylight. We had three big rafts of this lumber and it took six men to a raft.

I know of no one now living except myself who drove lumber on Hickory at that time.* H. P. McCalmont, my brother-in-law, was the last one I knew of—he died in 1921 at the age of 89, three years older than I.

The next summer I went to work with Gilbert McKinley at house carpentry. McKinley was a Scotchman and a man among men. He was as fine a workman as I ever knew and he and his brother had learned their trade in Scotland. They had their diplomas from the Carpenters' Guild in Scotland, stating their ability to do all kinds of high class work.

In this country all they needed was to show the work they did and no diploma or other recommend was necessary.

In those days we had no dressed lumber to work with; every carpenter dressed his lumber with his bench planes and worked from daylight until dark. We made our own doors, window sash, in fact every inch that was made of wood in building a house.

Today, half the men calling themselves carpenters, asking a dollar an hour and working eight hours a day really know very little about the carpenter's trade as we used to learn it.

The McKinley's built the old Judge Holeman house which is still standing on Holeman's Flats. I built the Eli Holeman house where Lawyer Mattox now lives but I believe the house has been pretty much made over.

I built two barns for the Pierson's in '60, still standing, and did a lot of work in Tionesta. Built the old jail in Tionesta and made the doors and windows for the court house there. Built a saw mill at President. I tell this because I was asked to mention some of the carpenter work I've done and this is just a tiny bit of it.

In 1869, I went to McGraw, Warren Co., to work for E. E. Clapp and worked for him twenty-three years.

The Henderson Farm at McGraw, which E. E. owned was a productive one—millions of dollars made and millions lost.

At one time we were producing 500 bbls. a day and holding it in wooden tanks scattered over the farm, some holding 450 bbls. but without a cover and evaporating at the rate of three inches a day.

I wanted him to build iron tanks which he could have got for 75 cents per barrel. One particularly hot summer his loss was enormous just from evaporation.

Later I built two 900 bbl. tanks. Dull times hit the business in the '70's. E. E.'s production was about 1,000 bbls. a month at this time, but he refused to sell, then took less later on. He had sold much however at eight and ten dollars.

There was one well within eight or ten feet of Clapp's line which pumped for years putting out 50 bbls. a day.

About the time this well was drilled in I built a rig for Clapp very near this big well, but he never got around to drill it until some of the rig timbers had rotted and weakened and I put in new ones.

Clapp said it cost less to store below ground than above, but

when this well was drilled he found that his neighbor had taken the oil that he might have had.

A blacksmith, by the name of James Diamond, worked for Mr. Clapp, at President. He was a quaint old Mass. Yankee and had helped to make the iron work for the Bunker Hill monument.

I wonder how many now living remember Old Dr. Smiley? He lived at President and gathered medicinal herbs and roots to make his own medicine.

The regular practitioners would of course not recognize Smiley but he could and did cure sick people just the same.

He was a very splendid type of man too—unselfish and modest, a real healer.

And so it goes. The memories come so fast I can't write them down.

One thing sure, boys, if you find real happiness it will be in useful work, well done.

PHAREZ G. WALDO.

By his loving Niece,

MAUDE M. MORRIS,

January, 1923.