

One Abraham Fuller settled on the Ouleout and built a grist mill on the site of the present mills. This mill was built probably in 1788, and was the first grist mill built in Sidney or in any of the adjoining towns. Previous to the building of this mill, the few inhabitants were obliged to go to Schoharie or Harpersfield to mill. One of Judge Wattles's sons used to say that his father had sent him forty miles on horseback to mill, through an almost unbroken wilderness. The first grist mill built on the Susquehanna, in Sidney, was built by a Mr. Bennett, who, it seems, owned it for a considerable time. It was afterwards owned by Mr. Crooker, and he built a woolen factory there.

One Carr built the only grist mill ever built on Carr's Creek. It was built at an early date. It was a small affair, and it is said that Carr brought his mill irons on his back all the way from Cooperstown; a distance of nearly or quite forty miles.

In the year 1789 Isaac Hodges came from the town of Florida, on the Mohawk river, in the county of Montgomery, to the Ouleout, to look for lands for his sons to settle on. He selected and purchased a tract of about 500 acres, being a part of the Patent that had been surveyed by Judge Wattles, a few years previous. His purchase extended from the line of lands now (1872) owned by Thomas Williams, down the stream to a line about a mile from the Susquehanna river, and included extensive flats on both sides of the Ouleout. He paid ten shillings (\$1.25) an acre, and he divided this land among his four sons, Hezekiah, Benjamin, Isaac and Josiah. Early in the spring of 1790 Hezekiah with his wife and his brothers, Benjamin and Josiah, moved on and took possession of the land. They came by the way of the Schoharie to the head of the Delaware river, and thence crossed over to the Ouleout, and followed that stream down to their place. They moved with a yoke of oxen and one horse, and carried their few household goods and provender or fodder for their team, on a sort of a sled, with very crooked runners, which in those days was called a *dray*, and which was so constructed as to be easily passed over logs and other obstructions. This sort of vehicle was much used then, being cheaply made, and, it is said, that barrels of rum were brought on them all the way from Catskill to the Susquehanna.

They arrived at their destination on the 29th day of April, 1790, with about 200 lbs. of hay for their teams and a little corn. On the day after their arrival the snow fell two feet deep, and

they suffered much for the want of provisions, and also for fodder for their teams.

After reaching their lands their first stopping place was on the lowest flat on the Ouleout, and on the farm now owned by William T. Hodges, a grandson of Hezekiah. There they camped out, and immediately proceeded to build a cabin in this way: They cut logs and rolled them up for two sides, leaving the other side open, and in front of the open side they piled a large log heap and set it on fire, and covering it with bark and brush they managed to keep dry and warm. In this cabin, on the 20th of June, 1790, Elizabeth, oldest child of Hezekiah, was born. She is still living. As soon as the sons had made a little improvement and built a house, their father came to and lived with them until he died. He was buried on his own land. Two of the sons soon went further west. Benjamin died, and Hezekiah and Maria, his wife, both lived in Sidney to good old age, and left numerous descendants; many of whom still reside in this town. Hezekiah brought apple seeds with him, and immediately planted a nursery near his first cabin, and that nursery is the father of many of the oldest orchards in that neighborhood.

In 1797 Stephen Dewey, with his sons, William, Roger and Daniel, settled on the farm now owned by his grandson, Ralph Dewey. Soon after, his son William, afterwards well known as Col. Dewey, purchased the farm and resided on it until his death. Col. Dewey filled many public positions. He was Supervisor of the town of Sidney and a member of the Legislature. Among other early settlers on the Ouleout are remembered the names of Jonathan Bush, at whose house the first town-meeting was held, and one Stevens, who had the grist-mill on the Ouleout and ran the first and only distillery for making whisky in the town. Oliver Gager, a captain in the militia, Nathaniel Wolcott, Josiah Thatcher, for many years town clerk, William Evans and others.

The first settler at Sidney Center, to remain there, was Jacob Bidwell. He moved there with his family in 1793, and built a cabin on the farm now owned by William Dewey. He moved his family on a sled. He went over the hill from the Ouleout to Carr's Creek, probably on the old State road, which was then just cut out and opened. The old State road commenced at Wattles's Ferry and ran up the Ouleout a short distance; thence directly over one of the steepest and highest hills in the town to the north branch of Carr's Creek; thence easterly, towards Catskill. It was never completed. In passing over the logs in the

road, Mr. Bidwell's sled broke, and it being dark he put Mrs. Bidwell and the children on the horses and went through. He went back for his goods the next day. Mr. Bidwell found two or three families about there, but their names are now unknown. The next winter, being a very hard one, these families all moved away, which left them alone, and Mrs. Bidwell did not see the face of a white woman for three months. They encountered great privations and hardships, provisions being scarce, and the timber was so heavy that it took a long time to clear the land and raise a crop.

A short time after, Mr. John Wellman came and settled on the farm now owned by Samuel Niles, and soon after, two families of Bradshaws came, one of which settled about where the school-house now stands, and about this time Charles Thompson moved in. Capt. Samuel Smith also settled on Carr's Creek about this time. He built farther up the creek, and his place went by the name of "Smith Settlement" for many years. Capt. Smith, in moving, had to cut his own road from Franklin up the hill, about where the Sherman Hill road now runs.

Nearly all of these old settlers raised large families, and have numerous descendants, some of whom still remain in Sidney, but most of them are widely scattered. Mr. Jacob Bidwell was a man of energy and industry, noted for his zeal and activity in religious matters. He was the father of the Baptist churches in Sidney, and conducted the first religious meeting on Carr's Creek. The occasion of the meeting was the death of the wife of Charles Thompson, one of the early settlers, who was killed by lightning under distressing circumstances. The few inhabitants at that time held a meeting at Mr. Wellman's house, and Mr. Bidwell there made the first public prayer ever offered by a white man on Carr's Creek; a revival ensued, a society was formed, and this was the foundation of the Baptist church in that part of the town, also of the church that was afterwards constituted on the Oule-out. Mr. and Mrs. Bidwell are both buried near their first home. The marble marks the spot where they lie, but a living and nobler monument to the memory of the wife stands on the land they first cleared. • It is a large pine tree, now about eighty years old, which was saved from the fire by her when the ground was burned over for its first crop. • It was then a small bush, and she saved it by throwing her apron over it and protecting it from the heat. Mr. Wellman was a captain in the Revolutionary War, a great hunter, and many stories are told of his prowess and

deeds in killing the bears, panthers and wolves, of which the country was full at that time. The first school on Carr's Creek was taught by Charles Bidwell, a brother of Jacob, and the only person now living who attended that school is Mr. Simeon Bidwell, now of Unadilla, who was born at Sidney Center in 1798.

Jonathan Carley came from Dutchess county in 1795, and settled on the banks of the Susquehanna, in this town, about two miles below Otego village. He found one Collyer and Nathan Hill there; Josiah Chase also came before that time, but at what date is not known. Some of Mr. Chase's family still remain on the farm. Laban Crandall, John French and Jerry Reed came immediately after; also one Godfrey Calder. The first school kept in that part of the town of Sidney, was taught by Miss Abigail Reed, in Mr. Calder's barn.

THE subject of the following sketch (Rev. Mr. Johnston) is the second son of Col. Witter Johnston, whose name is so often and honorably mentioned in the proceedings of the Centennial. Mr. J. is well remembered by the older residents of Sidney Plains as an amiable young man, remarkable for his diligence in the pursuit of knowledge, his freedom from the frivolities and excesses of youth, and perhaps, more than all, for his strictly conscientious deportment and exemplary religious character, which dates back almost to his earliest childhood:

REV. JAMES HARVEY JOHNSTON.

By Rev. J. F. Tuttle, D. D.

1824.

DECEMBER 9TH.

1872.

I have just been calling on the venerable patriarch of our Church in Indiana, the Rev. James H. Johnston. There was no special reason for the call beyond the pleasure it brought the visitor himself. The dates under his honored name indicate a period of forty-eight years. On the 9th of December, 1824, Mr. Johnston reached Madison, Indiana, a date which he affectionately retains as the beginning of his ministry and sojourn in this