

## J. M. PAXSON

I was born in Columbian County, Ohio, November 23rd, 1834. My ancestors on the father's side came from England, settling in Pennsylvania. They were members of the society of Friends. My father was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, November nth, 1790, and moved with his father to Ohio, Columbian County. He was twice married, I being the youngest of the last marriage. My parents move to Jay County Indiana in 1837, when I was three years old. My grandparents on my mother's side come from Ireland before the revolutionary war. Grandfather died on the passage, and was buried in the ocean. The children were put out amongst strangers on their arrival in America, Mad Anthony, or General Wayne, taking my grandfather. He and young General Wayne were raised boys together.

My grandfather's name was George McNely. He married in Philadelphia a Quaker girl by the name of Jane Register, moved to Columbian County, Ohio, after they had three children. The only thing I can remember when we lived in Ohio was standing at the fence with my father watching the carriages as the Friend Quakers went by to yearly meeting at Damascus. Moved to Indiana in 1837 in the fall, father, mother and three children then at home. We were accompanied on our trip to Jay County by Aaron Register and wife, and they had a carriage, we a big wagon. Thomas Register and Enoch Hunter (young men) came along. All I can remember on the road out was some men killing our dog. He had treed a squirrel, but never came back to the wagon. The men, I think, were drunk. I remember f lie men and the boys with us having a racket. We were nine days on the road, making the quickest trip that had been made. My oldest brother, William, and brother-in-law, Abraham Smith, had moved out some two or three years before we came. Brother William had a house up and an acre or two of ground cleared.

Though my father was not one of the early pioneers, yet we had some of the experience of pioneer life. In my mind's eye I can see the old log cabin with its small windows, its puncheon floor, the stake ridden roof, stick chimney and clapboard door with the latch string always out. I can see the small patch of ground around the house, and remember how year by. year it widened, and the neighbors seemed to get closer together as the woods disappeared. My brother, older than myself, was quite a hunter in a small way, though he never killed a deer or turkey. He was death on mink and opossum. The worst small varment dreaded by the hunter was the porcupine, for the dog was almost sure to get his mouth full of quills, then they had to be pulled out with the bullet molds or pinchers. Never saw but one Wolf and that after it was killed. Remember hearing them howl after night; never killed but one wild turkey. The deer used to come in our meadow to pasture, three or four at a time.

Mother was a great nurse in sickness and used to go far and near when the diphtheria broke out first. She was a faithful hand, never fearing for herself. She was something of a tailor, having worked at the trade in her younger days, and long hours after we were in bed she often plied her needle making garments for the neighbors. Can see her yet at the old spinning wheel, and how well I remember the wall pickings, quiltings and log rollings, the visits to her neighbors in winter on the big sled, in warmer weather on foot with the hickory bark torch to light us home. My father was a jovial, jokey man, but very firm. I always knew that when he told me anything that he meant it. Remember when one of my cousins was married Eli (Paxson) he and his wife were at our house for dinner my father asked the young lady if she could make a shirt. Yes, she said. Well, then you can get along, for Eli can make a shift, he has made many a one. One night a cousin was staying at our house, something got after the chickens, the young man (Joe Davis) jumped out of bed, jerked on his boots and ran to the hen house. As he came up something started to run for the woods, and having no club or anything to

kill it with Davis jumped onto it and stamped it to death. When he came in to the light and looked at his boots they were full of porcupine quills.

Our new ground was plowed with a single shovel with a cutter in front to keep it from catching on the roots. Many were the rides my brother gave me and my sister sitting between the plow handles. Must say it was not very smooth riding, as the plow jumped over the roots. I was always a sickly child. When about two years old I fell in a bucket of water where mother was washing, drowned so they had to fetch me to. Then had the whooping cough, was twice laid down for dead ; then the third day ague. Dr. Arthur says he gave me quinine enough to kill a horse, but outlived it all. It seemed to fall to my lot to go for the doctor when any one else was sick. I first went to school at West Grove, then to Balbec, but finally a school house was put up close to us which went by the name of Paxson's school house.

My father died in 1862. Mother afterward married and moved to Randolph County, Indiana, where, after my marriage, we lived for seven years till mother's death, on November 23rd, 1869.

I was married to Deliah B. Manley, daughter of Jeremiah L. and Mary A. Manley. My wife's parents moved from Athens County, Ohio, to Jay County, Ind., in 1851, making the trip in a big wagon, when their oldest child was a little over one year old, remained in Jay County about four years, then went back to Athens County, Ohio, where they remained two years, then again moved back to Indiana, Jay County. You people that load your household goods on the train, then take the express and reach your destination in so short a time, know nothing about the hardships of a trip of two or three weeks in the big wagon. Not many of the women of Jay County have made their trips in a big wagon of that distance before they were seven years old.

Mr. Manley was a cooper, so that occupation came in good play in the new county; he was also somewhat of a shoe maker. On one occasion he had piled in a lot of wood and roots for the morning fire, laid his boots on the wood when they were taken off at night. His wife getting up first to build the fire, piled on the wood and with them both of the boots, not noticing the difference till they were badly burned.

Getting home late one night after a hard day's work for a neighbor some miles away, Mr. Manley lost his way in the woods and was followed by a lot of wolves. Knowing that he was not far from home he called to his wife to make the dog bark. Guided by this he soon got home. Another experience his wife had returning home one evening on foot with her sister-in-law and two children (having been to see her father-in-law, some four miles away), Mrs. Manley saw some wolves in the woods close to the path. Being cool-headed, she picked up one of the children, telling her sister-in-law to pick up the other, said, lets walk a little faster, never telling about the wolves till they reached home.

Manley tried farming, then the goods business, finally studied law, in the practice of which he was proving very successful at the time of his death, in Geneva, Adams County, December 6th, 1880, aged 54, leaving a family of six children.

Many little incidents of early life will never be told in history, but I wish to drop a few of them; especially wish to remember the faithful old pioneer dog, not the fine-haired, imported dog, but the old that has stood his part. Remember our old dog would go for the cows as far as he could hear the bells and even farther. He has been seen a mile from home standing on a big stump listening for the bell. Then the old harvest field in which the dinner and evening pieces were brought out and how

myself and sister used to doze the sheaves; they must be six on a side and laid even. The sickle was only used for down wheat when I was a boy, but will carry a scar on my finger from its use while I live. Have raked wheat after the cradel and bound the end sheaf many a day for 25 cents per day. On one occasion I had taken mother to town in an old-fashioned jumper, as they were called; a pin sled with a hickory pole for a shaft and a clapboard bed on it. There was a fine haired young fellow from the east in town. As it chanced I knew his name, which was Pointer. As I drove up and hitched he came up, pushed his hat back, marched around our sled and said, do you call that a cutter? No, sir; I replied; its a pointer. A what? A pointer, I answered. He looked at me a moment and walked off.

Always made it a practice to tell mother where I was going when I went away. For several years before my father's death he was troubled with palpitation of the heart. We never let him go any where alone. We used to haul stove wood to Camden, a distance of three miles. Froze my feet once on the road. We lived on the line of the underground railroad, as it was called. Many times I have seen the darkies going by our house after night to the next station, just north of us, on their road to Canada. Was raised a Republican, but in 1884, realizing that the party would not stand out for the destruction of the liquor traffic, I pulled in with the Prohibition party and have worked with them ever since.

Never took a drink in my life, do not use tobacco, and my brother that is now living, can say the same. Though the forests of timber has been cleared away and the log house given place to the fine mansions in our county, we can see a forest of sin growing around us that it behooves US to clear away. The open saloon, the gambling den, prostitution, Sabbath descretion making a far worse wilderness than has been cleared away. Brothers get your prohibition ax and help clear it away.

**Source: Reminiscences of Adams, Jay and Randolph Counties; Lynch, T. A., Mrs.; Fort Wayne, Ind., Lipes, Nelson & Singmaster, job printers; 1897.**