

Transcript of typewritten reminiscences of Ebenezer "Eben" Condit [6311 9], 1837-1913, written in January 1912 and signed by him.

After nearly seventy five years In the same house in which I was born my mind frequently goes back in a retrospect of the occurrences and experiences with which I was familiar. I am the only one living of my fathers family of ten children.

The first ten years of my active life were spent in my fan-yard which was located about twenty yards north of my present home, and had in connection with it a shoe-shop where my two oldest brothers worked part of the time. As I grew older I came to know most of my fathers customers who came from all directions, some of them seven or eight miles.

I remember that at fifteen years I hauled ten or twelve cords of oak bark for the tan-yard from the farm of Solomon Souders one and one half miles this side of Gahanna [Ohio]. There was no bridge at the Rocky Fork at that time and the road crossed the stream at about fifty rods above the present bridge. near the crossing was a vein of sulpher water which came out of the rocks ice cold and fell Into a hollowed stone which somebody had placed there for a drinking place. And long after I grew up I often tied my horse and went down the bank and laid down on my belly to drink from that old stone basin.

At twelve years of age I was put to work in the tan-yards with two older brothers and some hired men. My brother and the men worked there all day and through the winter three hours each evening except Saturday night. I worked with them evenings - in the day time I was at school. I began going to school at five years of age and this was when I had my first pair of shoes. The school house stood just a few rods south west of the present site of the Presbyterian Church. The grounds are now enclosed by the Jersey cemetery. My first teacher was Nancy Dodd and boys of my age sat on a long bench of such a height that our feet did not reach the floor. Here we sat during the long days with out a book or anything but flies to occupy the time except when we were called to the teachers desk twice a to say our ab-abs. There were usually about thirty scholars in summer and forty to fifty in winter in a room 20 by 30, teachers wages seventy five cents a day and board. My recollections of these earlier years are much more vivid than of later ones. I remember when about five years old I climbed on the low closet and pulled down the old clock of course ruining it. Then father bought a large one which has ever since been marking the births, marriages and deaths in the house. And as I write is ticking away the little time that remains to me here.

In those years there were always ten or twelve in the family including hired hands and the first business in the morning was the gathering of all around the family altar, an exercise of great gravity repeated in the evening just before going to bed.

I slept for five or six years on a trundle bed rolled under the bed occupied by my older brothers behind a curtain at the head of the stairs. The manner of living in my fathers house was very plain but substantial. We had no butter of sugar on the table except Sundays or when company was present. But plenty of good bread - mean - potatoes - milk and apples all of which we had to eat up clean.

I completed what education I had in the Jersey school except the winter of '54 and '55 going to school in Johnstown, and '55 and '56 winter in Columbus. That was the winter that a deep snow covered the ground from December 25th to April 15th, fine sleighing all winter - my winter in Cols. [Columbus] Was much more valuable to me in the associations than in school. I boarded at Sam Galloway's [Samuel Galloway, U. S. House of Representatives, 3/4/1855-3/3/1857] who was then in Congress. Gov. Salmon P. Chase [23rd Governor of Ohio] who was a widower boarded just across the street, and with his daughter Kate (Kate Sprague) were often calling at Galloway's and I became quite well acquainted with him and thought a great deal of him. Mrs. Galloway attended many parties that winter among the first families of Cols. [Columbus] and I usually went with her by invitation as a (chaperone). My father frequently took me to Cols. [Columbus] with him when I was ten to fifteen years old. He stopped at the

Neil House where he introduced me as his "towhead" to such men as Gov. Tom Corwin, U. S. Senator Thomas Ewing of Lancaster, Judge Gustavus Swan, William Neil, Alfred Kelly of Ohio Canal fame, and other men of prominence at that time, who have all long passed away.

I remember the old State House which occupied all most the entire front of the State House yard, I don't know whether the present building was commenced but the old one was still occupied by state offices.

On our way to Cols. [Columbus] we crossed Blacklick Rocky Fork, Big Walnut and Alum Creek before there were any bridges, the plank road from Gahanna to Cols. [Columbus] Must have been built in the early '50's. After it had been built three or four years I remember how in a wet time the water would squirt up 2 or 3 feet between the planks as the horses trotted over it. But at that time it was regarded as *the* road, and a great improvement. The road from Jersey to Headley's Corners or the farms and buildings have improved greatly since then, but the country from Headley's Corners to Gahanna looks much the same as it did 50 years ago. During these years and previously the associations around Jersey village were around the Jersey church, which was organized in 1820. Farther north the Universalist church was organized in 1839. The tenets of that church and Pres. [Presbyterian] Ch. Were so radically opposite that their adherents naturally divided, and their associations were distinctly separate as far as church affiliations went.

Somebody once asked "Old Mattox" as he was called (a day laborer) what the difference was between a Pres. [Presbyterian] and a Universalist. He said "one believed every body would be saved, and other didn't believe anybody would be saved but the elected and damn few of them."

The feeling however at one time between the two congregations was such that Pres. [Presbyterian] seldom attended a Universalist funeral and vice versa, happily that is all obsolete now. I have known some faithful Christian people of the Universalist church and the same opinion is accorded to Pres. [Presbyterian] people by the U. [Universalist] folks.

I became a member of the church in 1855 and sat under the preaching of Rev. Chas. M. Putnam from my earliest years till he died in 1870. He had a faithful coterie of men for a session, Deacon War, Abner and Isaac Whitehead, Lewis Martin and Abram Whitehead. I looked upon those men, Pastor and Session with profound reverence and think of them yet as "Father in Israel." I did not miss more than 20 or 25 Wednesday Evening Prayer Meetings in 40 years, nor was I absent from Sunday School oftener than that for 50 years. This as I look at it now was probably more the result of my training than any thing else.

The foundation of the old church had fallen down in some places which made it a "rendez-vous" for hogs in warm weather (Hogs everywhere then) they always slept there, and their quarreling and bumping up against the floor during meeting, didn't promote the spiritual in a boy at 12 or 15 years, but we dare'nt laugh until we got out.

Mr. Putnam was very conservative preaching only the truths of the Bible never referring to politics in the most remote way. There was an element of abolitionism in the church, the annual parish meeting held in Jany. was often the scene of angry discussion in regard to Mr. Putnam's conservative stand in regard to slavery and many were refusing to support him on that account. I used to sneak in to listen at noon time, father caught me there once, gave me a few slaps and put me out. Then controversies were all eliminated in the tragic settlement of the slavery question by the Civil War, when many of the guardians of the Constitution (edited by an unknown hand to "grandsons of the contestants" transcriber) gave up their lives in a conflict not of their own making.

In the late '40's and through the '50's my father kept from 400 to 500 fine wool sheep the feeding of which was a days work in the winter months and compelled a large amount of haying in the summer. This was done with the scythe and hand rake till about 1848 when father bought a horse rake and in 1852 we had our first mowing machine, the old Ketchum mower.

I had to carry water for the hands (7 or 8) in a 2 gallon jug. We had a drive horse, the pet of the family (Old Tom), the first year of the horse rake we left him hitched to the rake under the shade of an old Oak tree where also was the water jug, wanting a drink he moved up to the jug and after smelling it smashed it to bits with his fore foot, I was tickled, a later jug was smaller and easier carried.

I have a faint recollection of the use of whiskey in my fathers hay field when I was a small boy. I remember it was very common among some of our neighbors as late as '47 or '48, Abner Whitehead, Enos Williams, Lewis Martin, Silas and Abraham Whitehead, Andrew Pierson and others were frequent visitors at our house, they were fathers most intimate friends outside the family. After haying was over as a business we boys (we usually had 2 or 3 from my bother-in-law's tan-yard at Galena) were set to making hay any where on the different farms where we could get a swath with the scythe. We had a field on the west place where we usually got a lot of it and where logs and stumps were plenty. We were at work there one day when we concluded we would bring the mowing machine from the meadow and mow with that. We got the team hitched on and as the machine required a good deal of speed we soon had the guards fast in an Oak log and were working hard to get them loose when father came along, he was always showing up when we got in a scrape and he always knew about when the scrape would come off. I always thought he was sorry we didn't break the machine all to pieces as there were better ones in the market then.

There are few men now who can successfully handle a scythe or an old fashioned grain cradle. My father died in 1863 leaving us children comfortably situated. My experience financially has been a failure. Looking back over the last 50 years I believe that had I succeeded I would have been at the biggest fool in Ohio. From 1874 to 1899 I was employed for several weeks in the summer buying wool for the woolen mill of Thos. Oaks & Co. In that time I bought for them about \$250,000 worth of wool and all without a ripple in our business transactions. About 1897 the younger Oaks went into the firm and employed young men in their purchases.

My mother died in 1884, at 89 years, and a sainted woman she was. Since my earliest recollection I never knew her to lose her temper, and her manner of dealing with us children was always firm, with the utmost kindness. I thank God every day for the moral character of my children, this they owe to their mother. They are all church members and I think are all Christians. One, Julia, is in Heaven with the Master since 1903. The number of boyhood associates of my own age and who are living I can count on my fingers.

How easy and pleasant life would be if we would let the Master mark out our way, instead of trying to manage it ourselves and planning in our own strength and wisdom, only to be disappointed. My greatest regret is that I have missed so much by not living in simple trust and humble obedience to the Master after all the manifold instances of His care over me thus have I abused the Savior and distressed myself. Simple trust in God, Industry and Economy are all the rules necessary for a successful moral life. With these rules adhered to wealth or poverty will fully satisfy the soul and sickness and pain will only broaden the intellect for future enjoyment.

All men of mature life have had their troubles, some by ill health, some by the loss of property, still others by the ingratitude of children for whom they have toiled and saved for many years, and are only interested in the dollars which their parents may leave behind. All the vicissitudes of life driving to the solemn fact that "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

E. C. signed Eben Condit

Editor Note: Without the able assistance and hard, faithful work of Eben Condit the 1885 edition of the Condit family genealogy would not have been compiled and published. He had a strong love for the family name and ancestry.