# [Chapter 3] — Locals at mudsock General store

A painting of people outside a general store

Description automatically generatedThe wedding of 1843 was a huge event for the folks in Washington township and Oxford township. The Coates’ were expecting over 150 guests, and that was mostly the Couts’ family! The planning was crucial for they had to plan a pig roast, with roasted chicken, duck, and turkey. It was also especially important to make certain there would be ample beverages and desserts for everyone, including uninvited guests who were most likely to show up whenever there was a free meal. The Coates were from New Jersey as well as other neighbors. When these folks arrived, they brought with them skills in producing drinks from apples. Guernsey county as well as Tuscarawas County, had rich fertile soils for apple, peach and cherry orchards. The land had plenty of water running in nearby creeks and waterways. Also, the fields were full of blackberries, raspberries, elderberries, other vegetation, and herbs which were useful for making wine and desserts. Water was plentiful but folks were hesitant about drinking from some water. Years before, in 1800, James Miskimen, (1775-1841), my great uncle, then a young man, journeyed to Ohio for the purpose. of selecting a site in the vast wilderness for a future home. He first visited a relative, named Young, who held a position in the land office at Chillicothe. While there, an old hunter who was well acquainted with the wilds of Ohio, recommended to him the north bend of Wills creek. Miskimen traveled afoot up the Muskingum and Wills creek valleys, saw the location, and was pleased with it. Not having the means with which to enter land, he returned to his father's plantations in Virginia, on the banks of the Potomac, and there, in conjunction with his brother, worked his father's distillery for five years. By this means he accumulated the sum of $700, and in the spring of 1805, again set out for Ohio. He spent his first summer here raising a crop of corn on Evans' prairie, in Oxford township; returning to Virginia that same fall, he was married to Catherine Portmess, and returned at once to their future home. As they were row boating up the Wills creek and could not go any further through the waterway, James looked at Catherine “Kitty” as he affectionately calls her, and says, “Kitty, here is our new home, what shall we call it?” Catherine said, “Jim, why don’t we name this land area, Linton?” and that was and still was the name Linton township. Linton after all was the name of the place in Maryland. Linton 100 was originally the name. It found there were at least one hundred farmers or town people who had a gun to defend their properties. He first entered the northeast quarter of section 7; subsequently, the southeast quarter of the same section, the northwest quarter of section 8, the east half of section 19 and other lands, becoming an extensive landowner in this township. He was a man of great force, possessed shrewd business qualities, and was strongly identified with the agricultural development of his township and county. His brothers, John, and William followed him to this township several years later.

James was a surveyor and traveled many times to Ohio. He purchased land from the government several times until he had four hundred acres. He and wife Kitty named the town Linton 100 after the town in Maryland. He built several homes for them and on a hill on the property had a graveyard. The original home of James and Kitty remained in the family for 133 years. It was finally sold when a flood range was established by the government. James had a mistress before his marriage to Catherine. He had two children by her. Rachel Miskimen, born 1802, married Samuel Tipton and a son Isaac, also known as James Isaac, born 1805, married Eleanor Stewart.

Guernsey county waters are notoriously sluggish and there has never been any inland navigation; indeed, not even a rowboat could be successfully propelled for any distance within the county limits. These slow-moving waters have a sickly yellow hue and are so shallow that even the bottom and top of Wills creek threaten to come together in midi-summer, yet an abundance of palatable water is easily obtained in any part of the county.

The emigrants who settled in the Washington Township area and Ohio Valley brought their knowledge of apple cider, apple jack and apple brandy. They found that their effort was better spent planting apples for drinking, not for eating. Apple cider provided those on the frontier with safe, stable source of drink, and in a time and place where water could be full of dangerous bacteria, cider could be imbibed without worry. Cider was a huge part of frontier life, which Howard Means, author of Johnny Appleseed: The Man, the Myth, the American Story, describes as being lived ‘through an alcoholic haze.” Hard cider was as much a part of the dining table as meat and bread. Starting in 1792, the Ohio Company made a deal with potential settlers: anyone willing to farm permanent homestead on the wilderness beyond Ohio first permanent settlement, would be granted one hundred acres of land. These settlers would be required to plant fifty apple trees and twenty peach trees in three years.

Couts’s farmers as well as the others from Sussex County, New Jersey, were aware of the Laird family distillery producing apple brandy and other Scottish alcoholic beverages. It has been produced since 1698. These farmers knew how to farm as well as what minerals to mine to help with pesticides, medicine, and daily life. The soil in Washington township and vicinity was derived from underlying rocks. These were shale and sandstone, except on the eastern border, where limestone at the base of the upper coal group is reached, the soil is thin and loose.

They found minerals important for iron ore heating. The odorless and tasteless properties of inorganic arsenic compounds such as arsenic trioxide (white arsenic) made an ideal pesticide and poison. Some frontier pioneers believed it improved the taste of homemade wines.

Eleanor (Aunt Nellie) Couts (1806–1860) sister of Isaac made the best elderberry and dandelion wines. She was a talker too! Sometimes her mouth would be moving so fast, no one could put in a word.

At every October harvesting, folks were often assisting with picking the trees and digging up turnips. Preparing for the frosty winter weather ahead. As mentioned earlier, this harvest time was special because a wedding was being planned before Thanksgiving. On this day, just so happens that a certain group of folks just by happenstance, gathered at the local feed store in Mudsock. Isaac, James, and “Aunt Betty” Elizabeth Coats, James Couts & his 7yr old son, William, and 6 yr. old Jesse, Isaac Couts Mr. Beal, Mr. Randall, Mr. Brice and schoolteacher, Hugh Anderson, along with his father, Matthew Anderson. Mr. Anderson Sr. served a few terms as Washington Township Justice of the Peace, in 1840-1846, as well as served as the local Postmaster General. The conversation was cordial but knowing Isaac, who was very well read and had a strong interest in politics, history and local news, the conversation would become more involved. Hugh Anderson was also highly informative. Folks would love hearing him tell stories of local history and seemed to grasp much detail. Mr. Brice had much knowledge of local history. Matthew Anderson was a talker and knew much about local and state politics.

James says “Hugh, my sons are so excited about attending your class this Spring. They were talking about local history that you must had taught on George Washington when he came to Ohio “

Matthew Anderson says, “Isaac, I bet you told them the time you were lost in the woods for 3 days. Now that is a story everyone knows in these hills” laughing jokily at the grown-up child Isaac.

Isaac says, “yes, I have repeated reading the story to all our Coats’s nephews, nieces, and cousins.

It is a bedtime story for most of our children “

Hugh said, “yes, your boys are particularly good at repeating my lessons and has told me about their uncle as being lost in the woods. They ask questions about local history of Tuscarawas and Indians. Sometimes they are distracted during times they should be practicing reading and writing ….”

Aunt Betty chimes in giggling “I do not help much with their interests in happenings around here, particularly All Hallows eve coming upon us. They insist on me telling ghost stories of those old Revolutionary soldiers, besides some old Irishman was trying to encourage some local teen boys to unhinge some gates as a prank, or tip over an outhouse. If you ask me, I say some folks get too much liquor in them “those boys are good kids. You know I am a self-taught nurse. They watch me make some Apple Jack and medicinal medicine for remedies to relief different ailments. “

Matthew Anderson says, “I can sure attest to the liquored-up men causing fights and shenanigans around these parts. I ordered some to pay fines for public drunkenness and disorderly behavior. A few of them had to stay in jail to sober up.”

Hugh said, “there are many interesting histories around this area. I was just reading the story about the Post boy murder.

Mr. Beal says, “Come on ye ramblers, wherever you be, draw near awhile and listen to me, of truth I will tell what happened of late, concerning young Funston’s most heart-rending fate.”

Isaac, “Oh you old man, most folks around here know about the post boy murder, in which John Funston, a 21-year-old farmer from this area near New Comerstown shot and killed William Cartmill in Oxford township not too far from here in September 1825. “

William Jr., with his eyes wide with excitement asks his father, “who was the post boy?”

James says, “never you mind, take Jesse over to your aunt Betty. Help her pick out some squash in the bin. “The boys obeyed and gleefully ran up to their aunt who was milling around local farmers squash and potatoes.

Hugh says “Isaac you know more about this. Your brother told me you studied some law at Madison college.”

Isaac says “yes, I did. I hope to gather more education in the legal field. These parts folks want to be able to trust a local more than a stranger to handle their affairs “Maybe someday, I will have your job Matthew, I think I would like it.”

“Some days, I wish I had you Isaac helping out,” Matthew Anderson said.

Isaac preceded to provide details to demonstrate his law knowledge Hopefully making a good impression on Matthew Anderson.

He said, “folks around here may not know about James Patrick, editor of the Tuscarawas Chronicle, the first newspaper published in Tuscarawas County. It was a complete story titled, The Trial, Confession, of John Funston. This is what it said, I read the story before. John Funston was born in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania in 1804. Hugh, your family from about that area. Anyhow, he stood about five” 10”, stout made, his shoulders round, with face round and ruddy, grey eyes, light hair, and strong thick neck, spoke fast and had a peculiar cast when speaking, his head towards the ground. He was very illiterate.”

Mr. Brice says to Isaac and James, “weren’t your father a witness or something like that “

Isaac says “no sir he had nothing to say since he was not out that way to see anything. But I tell you who was a witness. Mr. Johnston was. He resided over yonder near Birds Run. William Johnston was a key witness to this case. He was a suspect at first. Mr. Johnston was traveling with Mr. Cartmill. Johnston had stopped to water his horse in a nearby stream. He heard a gunshot from above in the road where he left Mr. Cartmill. When he reached the road, he found Cartmill body on the road. Johnston decided to get help. As he traveled down the road, he sees Funston coming towards him with a gun on his shoulder. Johnston asks Funston to help carry Cartmill to a nearby house. Funston refused and said because he was carrying a gun, people would suspect him. They both agreed to seek help together.

As they traveled down the road heading towards the tavern, Funston took the gun off his shoulders and wheeled it around, cocked the gun, and aimed it at Johnston’s face. He told Johnston not to come near him. Johnston said, “are you going to kill me?” Funston did not reply. Johnston then asked Funston to take the body of Cartmill that was slung over Johnston’s horse to the tavern, which Funston agreed. Johnston never saw Funston again until he saw him in jail.

Isaac said, “I do know that the trial began at the courthouse in New Philadelphia on November 16th, 1825. Judge Alexander Harper, and two associate judges, Nicholas Neighbour and Thomas Cunnings presided over the case.”

James Coats says, “our father and mother knew of the Neighbour folks back in Newton, New Jersey.

They lived near Stillwater. “

Aunt Betty says while walking over with a few pewter mugs containing hot apple cider.

Here some good warm apple cider for you all. I will retrieve some for you all too. Handing the two mugs to James and Hugh. James, the boys are over near the barn playing with the baby goats. Do not mind them at all. They are being entertained.

Are you saying that post boy story again, Ike?” Now what ever happened to that poor soul?

Isaac said, ok let me quench my thirst then I will tell you.

Sipping the warm cider, Isaac proceeded to finish his recollection.

The testimony of other witnesses showed Funston was reckless. He stole a ten dollar note from the bank of Lancaster that postmaster. John J. Wilson had given to Cartmill. Funston had flashed that bill around at numerous locations, including a military muster at Uhrich’s Mill (now Uhrichsville) and a store near Shanesville, (now Sugarcreek). The $10 bill was key evidence that convicted Funston. The day before the public hanging December 19, 1826, Funston attempted to hang himself in his cell using his suspenders, only to snap under his weight. Funston confessed to Judge Harper the entire murder. He said he thought he was shooting a horse trader named Smeltzer who was taking the same road carrying much money. John Smeltzer was late about 3 hours saving his own life. Smeltzer had known Cartmill and was shocked when he realized what could have happened.

On December 20th, 1826, a cold, wet day, Spectators gathered to witness the first public hanging in Tuscarawas County. Some even died from the cold wet weather from pneumonia. Standing on the gallows, his last words with a noose around his neck, echoed remorseful demeanor, “Oh my God, may God have mercy on my soul.” At 2pm, Funston's lifeless body dangled at the end of the rope.

“Amen” sighed Aunt Betty. Then said,” that was a story, but not the end.

Hugh says, that is some story, I never known the whole story. And what else could there be?

Aunt Betty says, not all locals believe that William Cartmill did not exactly rest in peace.

In fact, right at the tavern a few years back, not allowing the mail carrier from delivering his mail, his ghost is seen delivering mail along the route of the Post Boy Road, stopping at houses and the tavern.

Folks said shortly after his death, they seen an apparition of Cartmill appearing, then faded away in a grey smoke before their eyes! “

Everyone let out some giggles from the story, but one could tell some fearful anguish that danger can be in their neck of the woods.

Mr. Brice says, Hugh, you are being a teacher of facts, history, and knowledge, I have had some military men over for supper, and we discussed the not so pleasant history of these foothills. No wonder country folk get jittery about their safety. Strange goings on right up North a few miles. It is because of the evil that were done to Christian Indian folk.

Hugh says, oh yes you are speaking of earlier explorers in the early days of Ohio territory.

In fact, I believe some Moravian Christian missionaries came from Bethlehem Pennsylvania to set up a mission in Tuscarawas County. My parents spoke about this.

Matthew Anderson spoke up as he usually does to outdo everyone listening.

“In 1761, Christian Frederick Post, David Zeisberger and John Heckewelder met with Chief Netawatwees of the western Delaware Indians, also known as the ‘Lenape ‘. He invited them to the tribal village he had founded, Gekelemukpechunk (present-day Newcomerstown). He granted the missionaries permission to build a cabin near the junction of the Sandy Creek and Tuscarawas River, in present day Stark County. While they were successful in baptizing dozens of converts, they were forced to abandon the mission in 1763 during the French and Indian War. “

Mr. Beale says, “yes but then there was that terrible incident near New Philadelphia “

What he inferred was that in the Spring of 1772, Zeisberger, along with five converted Indian families established the mission of Schoenbrunn [ beautiful Spring] also known as Welhik Tuppeek, [best Spring]. John Heckewelder brought an additional 250 Christian Delawares into the village.

In late summer of 1772, a second settlement was established ten miles away called Gnadenhutten. In 1776, Chief Netawatwees donated land for another settlement, Lichtenau, [meadow of light] near present day Coshocton.

The American Revolutionary War brought the demise of these first settlements. The Delawares Indian tribes populated most of Eastern Ohio territory. In 1781, the Americans felt the Delawares were allies with the British. In response, Colonel Daniel Brodhead of the American forces led an expedition out of Fort Pitt and in April 1781 destroyed the settlement of Coshocton. Surviving residents fled North. Colonel Broadhead left the Delawares at the other Moravian mission’s villages unmolested, but the actions set the stage for tension.

Unnoticed was an elderly woman who had been ease dropping of the conversation between these men, and her demeanor by the impression on her face was disapproving. She was Mrs. Peter Tidrick, a strict religious woman, from the local Baptist society in Gilmore. She opened her mouth and at a voice pitch so unnerving said “Praise God “! This made everyone jump startled by her intrusive voice.

Mr. Brice, says, “Woman, your bout made me have a fit “

Never mind. It was a travesty of evil to have those poor Christian souls murdered. Praise God. Have mercy upon us. He knows what was done to Christian Indian folk. Repent your sins “exclaimed the woman. She turned to walk away, then suddenly stopped, and again faced the men, pointing her finger at Matthew Anderson, “you know innocent souls taken by evil, seeks revenge “Retribution will occur “

Pray for your forgiveness. “

The men sat still for a few moments, James says, “well was not that a special surprise “The men bursting out nervous laughter.

“Now James, you know what our mother says,” as Isaac attempts to ease the moment, “if you don’t have any nice things to say, don’t say nothing “

Matthew Anderson regains his composer and finishes his recollection of the fateful outcome of the history of Schoenbrunn. “The Indians returned to the old Moravian villages to harvest the crops and collect the stored food they had been forced to leave behind in October 1781. Then in early March 1782,

Lt Colonel David Williamson led 160 Pennsylvania militia to raid the village of Gnadenhutten. The Christian Indians were pacifists and denied any Pennsylvania attacks. But the Pennsylvania militia voted to kill them. The next morning, March 8, 1772, the militia tied up the pacifist innocent Indians and proceeded to mallet blows to them over their heads, then killed them by scalping. In all, the militia murdered and scalped twenty-eight men, twenty-nine women and thirty-nine children, which included twelve infants. They piled the bodies in the mission buildings and burned down the village. This came to be known as the Gnadenhutten massacre. It caused an outright frontier war to break out between the Delawares and the Americans. After several years of ongoing campaigns by the natives to terrorize and keep out further American settlers, a brutal campaign by US General “Mad Anthony” Wayne from Fort Washington (now Cincinnati) was conducted in late 1793, eventually resulting in the Treaty of Greenville being signed in 1795 between the US government and the local natives. The Treaty ceded the eastern 2/3rd of Ohio to white settlers and once again opened the territory to white settlements. “

Silence held amongst the men, and thoughts of what had happened touched their hearts. Mr. Brice said, “no wonder why folks avoid that area at night. Fear of ghostly haunting from those souls” My wife will not ever go with me to New Philadelphia through Gnadenhutten “

Hugh Anderson said, “ahu I know James, Isaac and Ms. Elizabeth would like to know... “

Aunt Betty chimes in, “I heard my name mentioned, as she placed two gallons of Apple cider, four large pumpkin squash and a few cabbages in the wagon, “what would I be interested in knowing? “Challenging Hugh to continue.

Hugh says, “It is a well-known ghost story about Mad Anthony Wayne.”

It involves a widow who happens to be a Mrs. Coats.”

Hugh, I am no Mrs. yet, smirked Aunt Betty. “And I ain’t planning to be no time soon.”

“Tell that story, because we need to get back and I need to stop by Mr. Simmerman’s farm,” said James.

Betty, get the boys after you hear the story, so we can be on our way.”

Hugh began the story by saying “it is the despair of unrequited love. A sad sobbing of one broken heart can be heard along the Shores of Lake Champaign near the historic Fort Ticonderoga “

Excitedly Isaac said, “oh hell, Fort Ticonderoga was where my grandfather was stationed for a brief time. He was a New Jersey “Blues” militia man “The only reason I know of Fort Ticonderoga because I read something about it.”

Well, this ghost has been repeatedly seen, her gown billowing amongst the icy waves of the lake nearby. 8

She is the ghost of Nancy Coates, onetime lover of General “Mad “Anthony Wayne.

I hope it is not our sister, Nancy. Her husband, Mr. Hartshorn, would not like that. Laughter.

Mr. Anthony Wayne was a hearty man who had a strategic mind. He was also a man who enjoyed the pleasure of the flesh and was quick to approach attractive women.”

I guess that leaves me out, laughing Betty said...

No, you are very hearty Ms. Elizabeth, and elegant in your manners said Hugh at a blushing Aunt Betty

James said, “It is not Elizabeth sweet, look at her red cheeks.

Oh stop. Right now, James, go on Hugh, tell the tale.

In 1771, General Wayne was given the commandment of Fort Ticonderoga and hosted a dinner party to celebrate his new post. At his party, two women caught his eye. Penelope Haynes, the daughter of a rich Vermont landowner, had a youthful countenance and attractive curve to her faceplate left many young men wanting. She was more the type to Wed than to engage in sultry endeavors beneath the covers.

Nancy on the other hand was a local widow who served at the party. Nancy was well known and liked among the anxious soldiers at the fort. Wayne remained infatuated with the scarlet beauty of Penelope but seemed satisfied enough to occupy himself with Nancy.

Being the nature of this man, his intentions toward both were nothing less than disreputable. He was not inclined to marry either woman. Unbeknownst to Nancy unfortunately who began to genuinely love Wayne and would whisper plans of marriage in his ear at night when they laid quiet, he saw this as a distraction. His view was for intimacy not permanent love affair.

Wayne received orders from General George Washington to provide protection to the women of nearby towns in Vermont and New York from British attacks. Wayne obliged and undoubtedly pleased with his task; he escorted a caravan personally back to Fort Ticonderoga. Only this time, he rode double with Penelope Haynes at his side. Nancy, unaware of the orders, asked around the local village to the whereabouts of General Wayne. As a joke, the local women told Nancy that Wayne was returning but with his bride. Heartbroken, Nancy asked a soldier if this was true, and he said yes. Since her romance with General Wayne, she had avoided any flirtatious affection towards any other soldier. This was the reason for the false account she received from the soldier. Nancy was left at a loss and found herself wandering around the narrow lake paths worrisome. She was near enough to the fort to hear General Wayne’s return and ran to greet him. But as she came in sight of the caravan, she sees Wayne in a lively conversation with the youthful Penelope. Unaware of the pale face that stared up to him wide eyed and trembling, or of the icy cold fingers that touched his boot as he rode by, Wayne only saw the auburn locks and the milk white skin of Penelope.

To Nancy, this proved true the story of his rejection and subsequently sealed her fate. Back to the water, the cool translucent blue, how mesmerizing the waves can be. Those cold fingers could not feel the frigid temperature of Lake Champaign but the laughter of soldiers snickering at their posts, knowing what truths lies in deception. But most of all, she could hear the melodious laughter of Penelope Haynes, astride by her lover’s mount touching his waist.

She could not return to the fort to him, the Lake Champaign called her. The loll of lapping waves soothed her thoughts. Nancy found solace under the waters of the glacial lake as an alternative to the false security of her lover’s arms. The Lake accepted Nancy, let her walk into the serene body and pulled her down to the depths to keep her lonely frame forever. It would later give her back tired listless body to a couple of fishing soldiers who found her floating amongst the reeds.

She faced the sky, her hair, floating soft and elegant with the pulse of the waterway the only part of her left with any kind of life. But in death, her languished brow was smooth and her eyes careless in life were closed in peace and finality.

Her ghost is not peaceful. Her apparition is seen roaming the paths of Lake Champaign. Others have seen her walking amongst the guardroom and in the road at the gate of Fort Ticonderoga.

\*The group disbanded and went about their ways. James and Isaac got in the wagon front seats to steer the horse home. Aunt Betty resumed her seat in a large chair in the rear of the wagon. She was well known for this. She was described in a letter from Anna Ruth Mitchell “One of my father’s recollections of Aunt Betty, she was a large woman, and she always rode on a chair in the rear of a spring wagon, carrying with her an umbrella over her.