

FRANKLIN PIERCE OATMAN, in his lifetime one of the extensive and progressive farmers of White township, Indiana county, was born Aug. 4, 1854, in Rayne township, this county. He was a son of Joseph Oatman and grandson of Jacob Oatman, who was but a child when his father came to the United States, from Holland, the Oatman and Johnston families—to which latter the wife of Joseph Oatman belonged—crossing the ocean in the same vessel. The first account we have of them is of their residing in a locality in Mifflin county, Pa., known as “Long Hollow.” The hollow begins at the old iron furnace near Mount Union on the east side of Jack’s Mountain, and extends to McVeytown, formerly known as Waynesburg, and long ago simply as Wayne. The grandchildren of Jacob Oatman remember hearing their parents tell of their childhood days spent in the “Long Hollow.”

The following letter written by C. L. Oatman, Oct. 1, 1885, from Lake Geneva, Walworth Co., Wis., gives a brief history of the Oatman family to which he belongs:

“My grandfather, George Oatman, had three brothers, Benjamin, Isaac and Joseph. Their father was a Hollander; came from Germany and settled in the town of Old Milford, Conn., about seven miles from New Haven, where the family were born and reared. My grandfather and his brother Isaac came to Vermont. George (my grandfather) settled in Rutland county, and Isaac in Bennington county, and Benjamin settled in Jefferson county, N.Y. Joseph, the other brother, was called the lost Oatman; went from home south and was supposed to be dead. Now you will know which you descended from—either George, Isaac, Benjamin or Joseph.

“In 1836, at Beardstown, on a steamboat on the Illinois river, going up the river, my name was called and it seemed to startle one of the passengers who said that was his name and that that was the first time he had ever heard it outside of his own family. Comparing notes it was shown that we were cousins and he a son of Joseph Oatman, with family who afterward settled in Kane county, Ill. He and a portion of his family left here and went to Texas and are large cattlemen and rich. Edward and Frank Oatman reside at Dundee, Ill. Joseph Oatman, the lost one, went to Kentucky and settled near New Albany on the Ohio river, and this branch of the family came from Kentucky. Eli Oatman, my father, was George Oatman’s son; had two brothers, Lyman and Elizkim. Royce Oatman, son of Lyman Oatman, started for California in the fall of 1849 with a family of seven children on the southern route and were massacred by the Apache Indians. Olive and a little sister were taken prisoners. Olive, I believe, was some twelve years old, and her sister younger, who died—could not stand the hardship. Lorenzo, a brother, was left for dead on the ground, and recover, but afterward died. Olive was rescued in 1856, after a captivity of some six years. She became since her captivity finely educated, married a man from near Detroit, Mich., by the name of Fairchild, and he is now or was last year a banker in the city of Sherman, Texas. She is badly marked (tattooed) about the face. I have a book of their history. . . . A little more history would show that the name was not originally Oatman, but Hoatman, and (there) being two of the same name but no relation at Old Milford, to separate their progeny they cast lots, or drew cuts, as

to which should leave out the 'H.' and our side got beat and left the name 'Oatman,' as we write it." In a postscript he adds: "Joseph lived in Kentucky, was a large slave owner, died and was buried near New Albany on the Kentucky side of the river and a large monument raised to his memory. A little more history of the massacre—when they were murdered on the southern route to California. The ground has been enclosed and monuments to their memory erected by the government, and is now one of the stop-off places of excursionists."

A similar story is told by the family of Joseph Oatman of Indiana county, Pa. The names of the three brothers of their grandfather, Jacob, are, however, John, George, and Royce: these went to California in 1849, but it was John's family that was massacred. They say there was a copy of the history mentioned in the possession of their family, but that it was loaned out and lost; that it was published in 1850.

Jacob Oatman, grandfather of Franklin Pierce Oatman, was born in the eastern part of Pennsylvania, and died Sept. 12, 1835, at Water street, Pa. he married a Mary McReady, who was born Dec. 4, 1779, and died Sept. 16, 1850. They had a family of seven children, one son and six daughters: Lydia, Joseph, Anna Maria, Jane, Rebecca, Nancy and Sarah.

Joseph Oatman, second child and only son of Jacob and Mary (McReady) Oatman, was born Dec. 15, 1810, and died June 30, 1899. He came to water Street, pa., from the "Long Hollow," Mifflin Co., Pa., April 21, 1836. From there he moved to Williamsburg, where he resided about eight years, and then moved again, to Indiana county. This was about 1844. He was foreman for eighteen years on the Pennsylvania canal, and lived in the same house with Maj. Samuel Caldwell, who married his sister Anna Maria. Major Caldwell owned and operated an axe factory at Water Street for many years. The house they lived in was a double stone dwelling which was long afterward used as a hotel, and may be so used yet. The grandfather, Jacob Oatman, died here shortly after the death of his grandchild William, son of Joseph.

On July 10, 1834, at the home of the Johnstons, three miles above Williamsburg, Pa., Joseph Oatman was married to Eliza, daughter of William and Jane Johnston. Joseph Oatman in a note written by him in a book which belonged to his states that "Joseph and Elizabeth Oatman was joined in wedlock on Thursday, the 10th of July, 1834." And then he adds--"He aged 23-6-25, She aged 21-7-11." This would make her birthday Nov. 29, 1812. He also notes that "Johnston Oatman was born April 9th, 1835, and died the 29th June, 1835, age 2m 18d." This was his first child, whose full name was William Johnston Oatman.

The children of Joseph and Eliza (or Elizabeth) Oatman were as follows: (1) William Johnston, born April 9, 1835, died June 29, 1835. (2) George Washington, born Oct. 12, 1837, belonged to the law firm of Johnston & Oatman for many years; Robert E. Johnston, his law partner, was his uncle. He married Priscilla Jane Tibbett, of Ebensburg, Pa., and their children were: George B. McClellan; Martha and Elizabeth, who married William Hargnett, of Ligonier, and lives at Wilmerding, pa.; Alice Catherine, who married Robert Gillan, of Johnston, Laurel Hill; and Annie Laura, unmarried. (3) James Johnston, born at Williamsburg Dec. 24, 1839, taught public school. In 1861 he enlisted in

Company B, 11th Pennsylvania reserves; served three and a half years; and was at the battle of peach orchard, where on June 29, 1862, he received a fracture of the skull and was left on the field for dead, but later fell into the hands of the Confederates and was taken to Libby prison, remaining there three months. After the close of the war he taught a year as principal of the Ebensburg high school; studied medicine, graduating in 1867 from Jefferson Medical College; located first at Carrolltown, Cambria county; in 1870 graduated from Hahnemann Homeopathic College; located in Altoona, where he built up a large practice. In 1897 his wound in the head so affected his health that he was obliged to abandon practice. He died soon after, Jan. 29, 1900, at his home, No. 1700 Fifth avenue, Altoona, Pa., from the effects of his injury received in the line of duty, but his widow has nevertheless so far been refused a pension. In 1868 he was married to Regina H. McDermitt, daughter of Col. B. A. McDermitt, of Ebensburg. Their children were born as follows: William Johnston, April 5, 1869 (druggist at Osceola, Clearfield Co., Pa.); Robert, Nov. 16, 1870 (machinist in Altoona car shops); Stella Gertrude, Aug. 1, 1874; Charles Joseph, March 24, 1878 (works in the Altoona shops); Genevieve Catherine, March 26, 1887; Ernest Francis, Oct. 10, 1888; Ralph Bernard, Aug. 20, 1896. (4) Martin Luther married Nannie Evans, of Granville, Ohio. (5) Mary Jane, unmarried, at present lives at No. 105 North Fifth street, Indiana, Pa. She taught in the public schools of Indiana county, and took care of the old home in her father's old age. (6) Anna Maria died Feb. 26, 1879, aged twenty-two years. (7) Robert Lipton married Fannie Yeager, of Napoleon, Ohio. He died and she married a Mr. McLaughlin, of Lancaster, Pa., where she now lives. (9) Franklin pierce was the youngest.

Franklin Pierce Oatman grew to manhood in Rayne township, Indiana county, helping with the agricultural work on his father's homestead, and also following lumbering and carpenter work. He became an expert mechanic, so handy with tools that he could even build a carriage or do other work not usually possible to any but an experienced tradesman. He continued to follow farming carpenter work on his father's place in Rayne township until August, 1894, when he moved with his family to White township, settling on the Lockhard farm, a tract of 174 acres owned by his father-in-law, Peter Leasure. This farm, located one mile from the center of the borough of Indiana, he subsequently bought from Mr. Leasure, and there he continued to live and work until his death, which occurred at that place March 2, 1905. He followed general farming and stock raising on an extensive scale, and was one of the most advanced agriculturists of his district, his work being done in the most intelligent and approved manner. He had particularly fine horses, and his residence and other buildings were kept in excellent condition, the whole property presenting a most creditable appearance. He gave all his time to his own work, taking a public-spirited interest in matters affecting the general welfare, but never seeking office or entering actively into such affairs. He was a staunch Democrat in political opinion, and in religious connection a Lutheran, belonging to the church of that denomination in Rayne. He is buried in Greenwood cemetery, Indiana.

On march 16, 1886, Mr. Oatman married Samantha Leasure, who was born on the homestead farm in Green township, this county, daughter of Peter

and Margaret Ann (Miller) Leasure, and to them were born six children, namely: Margaret Velma, now the wife of Nealis Groft; Elva, who is now a student at normal school; Vernie Iona, Lucy Catherine, Martha Jane and Anna Arvilla, all attending school. Mrs. Oatman now owns and occupies the farm in White township, where she and all her children reside, her son-in-law, Mr. Groft, now conducting the place for her. This land is underlaid with two fine veins of coal, though they are not being operated.

We have the following record of the six daughters of Jacob and Mary (McReady) Oatman:

(1) Lydia Oatman, born Aug. 15, 1809, died in 1872, aged about sixty-two. About 1829 she was married to James Shorthill, who was born in 1799 and was about five years old when he came to the United States with his parents, John and Nancy Shorthill, who with their children Thomas, James and Dennis emigrated from Ireland to America about the year 1804 and settled in Mifflin county, Pa. They afterward moved to Huntingdon county, having bought a farm of five hundred acres in the ridges five miles from the town of Huntingdon and about three miles from Millcreek. James Shorthill sold his share of the farm and moved with his family to Hollidaysburg about the time of the construction of the Pennsylvania railroad. Here they kept a boarding house for men who worked on the reservoir. They remained here only about three months, when, about 1846, they settled in Indiana county near to the Oatman family, some six miles east of the town of Indiana, which place was laid out about 1805. Thomas Shorthill, eldest son of John and Nancy, served in the war of 1812 and died in the service. Dennis Shorthill went to Clarion county. John Shorthill, the father, died at his old home near Millcreek, Pa., was buried in the town of Huntingdon.

James and Lydia (Oatman) Shorthill had children as follows: Mary Jane, born April 28, 1831, married Adam Snyder, by whom she had no children, and (second) John Johnson, by whom she had three, Margaret, Ellsworth and Annes (a daughter); Anna Maria, born June 24, 1832, is the widow of Joseph Mauk, who was a soldier in the Civil war, and she lives at Marion Center, Pa. (they had no children); Rebecca, born May 16, 1834, was married July 29, 1866, to Joseph McCormick, son of Joseph, of Smicksburg, Pa., and they have two children, Eveline Lydia, born May 28, 1867 (married Oct. 18, 1888, James C. Bovard, son of James; no children; they keep hotel in Marion Center), and Joseph Carothers, born Sept. 26, 1870 (married Jan. 4, 1894, May Wyncoop, and has three children, Charles Lloyd, James Donald and Joseph Paul); James, born in March 1836, married Elmira Burke, of Cambria county, and died in 1895 (they had one daughter, Mary, who is married and has two children, Gray and _____); Sarah Elizabeth died unmarried; Albert died unmarried; Joseph died unmarried; George Washington married Barbara _____, of Canton, Ohio, and had children James and Joseph, both unmarried.

(2) Anna Maria Oatman, the second daughter, was born Sept. 8, 1816. About the year 1839 she became the second wife of Maj. Samuel Caldwell, then a widower with three living children. He was the fourth child and fourth son of Maj. David Caldwell, eldest son of Robert Caldwell, who came from County Derry, Ireland, was of Scotch parentage, and settled at Barree, on the Little

Juniata (close to the present station of Barree on the Pennsylvania railroad), in the year 1754. His brother Charles settled near Alexandria, some three miles distant, at the same time. Those emigrants had previously stopped at the settlement in Cumberland county (now Franklin) known as the "Cannogojig" (Conococheague). Maj. David Caldwell, eldest son of Robert, became the sole owner of the old homestead. He married Rebecca Dean, daughter of Matthew Dean, of Canoe valley, whose wife and several children were massacred by the Indians in 1780, and became the father of twelve children, from whom are descended all the Caldwells of the counties of Huntingdon and Blair. For his first wife Maj. Samuel Caldwell married Mary, daughter of Israel Cryder, who lived near the old Caldwell homestead at Barree. She was born Aug. 15, 1802, and died April 18, 1835. She was the mother of five children: Susanna, born April 22, 1827, was accidentally poisoned and died Aug. 29, 1936; David, born Nov. 13, 1828, was a lawyer at Huntingdon, and died in Tyrone, pa., April 6, 1893; Israel Cryder, born Jan 22, 1830, married Rebecca Ellen Riddle, and died June 21, 1896, leaving two children, John R. and Samuel Horace, both of whom have families, the former living in Toledo, Iowa, latter employed in the shops at Wilmerding, Pa. (Israel C. Caldwell was a merchant and land speculator, with this peculiarity that he was always buying but never sold, and about a year before his death there was a general collapse of his business affairs); Hannah Mary, born Dec. 9, 1831, married Feb. 22, 1869, N. L. Tabler, and lives near Minooka, Ill. (they have three children living, Ella, Rebecca and Mary; one is deceased); Rebecca Harriet was the fifth child of Samuel and Mary (Cryder) Caldwell. By his second wife, Anna Maria (Oatman), Major Caldwell have five more children, namely: William Calvin, born at Water Street, Pa., May 16, 1840, was a commercial traveler, and died unmarried Nov. 16, 1880, at Tyrone, pa.; Rebecca Elizabeth, born Jan. 17, 1842, at Water Street, was a teacher in the public schools, and died unmarried Oct. 21, 1875; Robert, born in Huntingdon Dec. 24, 1843, died there Jan. 11, 1848; Letitia Maria, born in Franklin township (Elizabeth Forge) Oct. 3, 1845, taught public school in Huntingdon and Blair counties, and married Prof. A. W. Greene, a teacher in the Tyrone schools, and has four children, Orville Caldwell, Samuel Maruice (married and has one child), Mary Lois and Maria Letitia (they live in Clarinda, Iowa); and Samuel dean, born at Huntingdon Nov. 3, 1847.

After successfully operating an axe factory at Water Street for many years Maj. Samuel Caldwell went into the manufacture of "blooms" at Elizabeth Forge. But the great depression in the iron trade coming on, he failed in his new enterprise. He was county surveyor for six years, and passed much of his time in the woods tracing old lines and settling disputes as to boundaries, being considered one of the best land surveyor in the country. About 1850 he purchased a farm in Black Log valley, in the lower end of Huntingdon county, to which he removed his family which consisted then (1852) of his wife and four children, the children of his first wife not being at home then. This farm he named "Hickory Grove," from the large quantity of hickory which grew upon the place. Here he farmed until his death, which occurred May 1, 1857, though he still surveyed a great deal, often being from home weeks at time. It was while on

one of his surveying trips that he contracted the cold which terminated in his death. He died of pneumonia, which was little understood at that day. His widow moved with her four children to Shade Gap in 1858, where at Milnwood academy they received a fair educational training, which stood them all in good stead in after years, when they were obliged to hoe their own rows. All four taught in the public schools of Huntingdon and Blair counties.

Samuel dean Caldwell, tenth and last child of Maj. Samuel Caldwell, collected and compiled the greater part of the family history used in this article. After teaching for ten years he went to the city of Washington and in the spring of 1874 entered the government service. He has been there ever since, with but few intermissions in his employ. The first two years he was in the treasury department, was afterward in the postoffice department, war department, national board of health (three years), United States Senate (seven years as private secretary and stenographer, several sessions as assistant reporter to the official reporters of House debates, and the balance of the time acting as private secretary to different members of the House and Senate) and—for the last eight years—with the Indian Bureau of the Interior department. Among his personal friends he has had the pleasure of numbering such men as James G. Blaine, Simon Cameron, Samuel J. Randall, R. Milton Speer, gen. Harry White, William Walter Phelps, John Kean, Jr., Joseph McKenna, W. D. Washburn, John H. Mitchell, J. N. Dolph, P. B. Plumb, Gilbert A. Pierce, and R. R. Hitt. Mr. Caldwell still owns his old home in Shade Gap, Pa., but in 1890 he bought a little farm six miles north of Washington, at Bethesda, Md., in Montgomery county, where he entertains in true Pennsylvania style those of his friends who take the trouble to hunt him up. On Oct. 29, 1874, he married Jennie Gertrude Ardinger, daughter of Hon. Charles G. Ardinger, of Williamsport, Md. And they have had four children, three daughters, all deceased, and one son, who survives, Samuel Dean, Jr. the latter, born March 15, 1882, is a graduate of the Western high school of Washington, D.C.

(3) Jane Oatman, third daughter of Jacob and Mary (McReady) Oatman, died when about nine or ten years old.

(4) Rebecca Oatman, fourth daughter of Jacob and Mary (McReady) Oatman, married Douglass Wray, by whom she had several children. Her second husband was a Hodgman, and in 1873 they were living in Berea, Ohio. Her daughter Sarah married a man named Howard. On April 12, 1836, Douglass Wray and his wife Rebecca wrote a letter from Mercer, Pa., addressed to Joseph Oatman, Huntingdon, Pa.; the postage on it was eighteen cents, and the letter was folded in the old style, there being no envelopes used in those days.

(5) Nancy Oatman, fifth daughter of Jacob and Mary (McReady) Oatman, married a Dickson, and had two children: Walter, who is deceased, and Mary, Mrs. Bundy, who had two children, Clara and Frank (they live at Decatur, Illinois)

(6) Sarah Ann Oatman, sixth daughter of Jacob and Mary (McReady) Oatman, married William Campbell. In a letter written by William Campbell to Joseph Oatman, dated A. P. R. R. (Allegheny Portage Railroad) Aug. 24, 1839, he speaks of a fine boy having been born to them, and says he will be seven months old on the 15th of September. He says he is still living at No. 2, and

hitching at the foot of the plane at the rate of seven dollars per week, or rather one dollar per day Sunday and weekdays. He says further that as he (Oatman) is his last letter had talked of leaving that place (presumably Williamsburg) he does not know where to address his letter. He adds in a postscript that the name of his boy is "Abert" (meaning Albert).