

The Squier(s) Family.

Evert O Hutchins

Waukegan, Ill.
1939

THE SQUIER(S) FAMILY

Compiled by
Evert O. Hutchins

(Based on recollections of Jonathan)
(Squiers, son, and Ann Hutchins, daughter)
(of Sidney Roberts Squiers, and the his-)
(torical records of Pier Cove By Henry)
(Hudson Hutchins.)

JONATHAN SQUIERS, 1st

The Squier family probably arrived in America from England with the Puritans. The first known ancestor was named Jonathan. He was presumably born in England and came to this country with his parents.

Jonathan first appears in New York State coming possibly from the "Eastern States". Jonathan Squiers, son of Sidney Roberts Squiers, remembered having heard his father speak of him often. He also heard his grandmother, Lois Morse, speak of him. Sidney Robert Squiers told his son that this Jonathan served in the Revolutionary War.

JONATHAN SQUIERS, 2nd

Jonathan Squiers, son of the Senior Jonathan, was born July 23, 1759. He lived in Wayne County, New York, near Sodus Bay located on Lake Ontario. He was undoubtedly a farmer by occupation. Jonathan's grandson Jonathan who was the son of Sidney Roberts Squiers, said that his grandfather may have served in the Revolutionary War as he had often heard his grandmother speak of "running bullets."

Mr. Squiers was married to Lois Morse, who was born June 20, 1769, to whom seven children were born.

THE SQUIER(S) FAMILY

Mrs. Squiers lived to be over eighty years of age and was very supple at this age. She was married a second time to a man whom her grandson Jonathan, believed to be James Norris. No children were born to the second marriage. She had a stepson however, named James Norris. Her home was located near Sodus Bay at the time of her death.

Jonathan died near Sodus Bay about 1830 at the age of over 70 years.

SIDNEY ROBERTS SQUIERS

EARLY LIFE

Sidney Roberts Squiers, third child of Jonathan and Lois Squiers, was born in Wayne County, New York, near Sodus Bay, located on Lake Ontario.

In his boyhood he studied geography and Arithmetic. He might also have studied other subjects.

During the war of 1812 he served in the cavalry, in whose command is not known. Later he took up land in Michigan on his military service but never secured a deed thereto. It is possible that the land office in Lansing, Michigan may have records to supply this information. His son Jonathan said that he had often seen his fathers military equipment which consisted of a jacket, saddle and saber.

IN THOROLD CANADA

After the war Mr. Squiers and a man named Richard Collier went from the vicinity of Syracuse, N. Y. to Thorold Ontario, Canada where Mr. Squiers was employed as a hewer and Mr. Collier was

THE SQUIER(S) FAMILY

employed as a scorer on the first Welland Canal which was then under construction.

After the canal work was finished, Mr. Squiers formed a partnership with an Alexander Christy in a lumber and flour mill business. This business was carried on for several years when the partnership was dissolved and Mr. Squiers failed in business. In those days people were imprisoned for debt and he was on a limit for sometime. His father-in-law, John Hoover helped him out of the difficulty.

In 1825 he worked on the Erie Canal at Lockport, New York.

MARRIAGE 1st TO SUSSANA HOOVER

While in Thorold Mr. Squiers was married to his first wife, Susanah Hoover. Miss Hoover was born in Thorold, and received a moderate education. To this marriage four children were born. Mr. Squiers bought an acre of land at the corner of Clairmont and Front Streets in Thorold, the site which in 1816 was occupied by the City Hotel. Here he built himself a house, a barn and a workshop. The house was destroyed by Thorold's "big fire", but the old shop was standing as late as 1916.

LOCKPORT, N. Y.

In 1836 after Mr. Squiers had failed in business he went with his family to Lockport, New York, where they first lived on Lock Street. Later he bought about an acre and a quarter of land on Olcott Street where he built himself a home.

BATTLE CREEK, MICH.

Mrs. Squiers died May 15th, 1846 and he traded his Lockport
(2)

THE SQUIER(S) FAMILY

property to a man named Armstrong for a water-wheel, right at Battle Creek, Michigan. This was called the Armstrong wheel. In the fall of this year Mr. Squiers returned to Lockport and harvested his wheat. He then returned to Battle Creek, bought property near the wheelright and erected a sawmill.

MARRIAGE 2nd TO ABIGAIL OLMSTEAD

While at Battle Creek,. Mr. Squiers met his second wife Miss Abigail Olmstead the daughter of Peter and Hannah Olmstead. They were married September 23rd, 1849 at Leroy, Calhoun County, Michigan. Miss Olmstead had obtained a moderate education. To this marriage three children were born.

Abigail Olmstead was born at Parma Monroe County, New York, on May 19, 1824.

PIER COVE

After about six years Mr. Squiers sold this property at Battle Creek and went to Pier Cove in ~~ganges~~ township, Allegan County Michigan. The mill that he had operated at Battle Creek was moved to Pier Cove about 1832, and was operating there in 1853. "He moved the mill previous to the family coming," said Annis Kibby one of his daughters. "I remember mother telling of being left alone there while father was here putting up the mill. The family came in 1854. They moved into the woods and father had to go to Allegan to get wheat ground. Mother was afraid to stay alone nights while he was gone as the wolves were howling around the house, so she carried rails into the house to prop the door shut."

Ann Hutchins another daughter remembered having heard the

THE SQUIER(S) FAMILY

old settlers tell of the cry which sounded like a baby in the woods and was told that it was the cry of a panther. She also remembered an old Indian who called on the family who would secure an invitation to dinner for himself and then would call his son "John" who had not until then made his appearance, to also partake of the meal.

Pier Cove is located at the mouth of a creek which emptied into Lake Michigan at the West end of the quarter line of Section 5, Ganges township,

Lake Michigan forms a long curve inland here and when the Pier was later built the place was called Pier Cove.

At this time wood was used exclusively for fuel because coal did not come into general use for heat and power until after 1880. Chicago and other towns of the west furnished a demand for lumber for building, wood for fuel as well as tan bark, etc. The early settlers were faced with the problems of disposing of the timber which they had to cut in clearing their land for farming purposes. Large tracts of valuable timber was windrowed and burned, with no profit or use to any one. The early settlers therefore had plenty of fuel wood that they cut while clearing their land. If transportation could be provided they realized that the wood could be sold at a profit for all of their hardwood timber could then be cut into cord wood.

There was no means of transportation here at that time nearer than "the flats" or "Kalamazoo harbor" or Newark all of which were located where Saugatuck now stands. The only road to this place was by the Lake shore which was deep sand and a hard haul.

Marcus Sutherland came into this community and saw the possibilities. He interested himself to the extent of financing

THE SQUIER(S) FAMILY

the construction of a pier at the mouth of the creek and the project was completed in 1849. Mr. Sutherland saw that the traffic would grow as the years passed by and new settlers came in. The results during the following years proved that his judgment was correct.

This pier was so planned and constructed that wagons drawn by teams of horses could be driven to the outer end of it, unloaded, turned around and returned.

This was the first of five piers built between the towns later known as Saugatuck and South Haven. The task was not an easy one as the labor was all furnished by man power as Steam pile drivers were not in use in this country at that time.

The mill that Mr. Squiers owned was operated in partnership with a Mr. Cronson who had come to Pier Cove with him. It was a steam mill with an upright saw since this was before the time of the circular saw. It was located on the top and several rods east of the lake embankment and immediately south of the quarter section line at this point and across the mill pond from the grist mill.

The cordwood and tan bark business flourished along with the lumber business from the time that the pier was constructed until the timber land had been converted into farming land.

Two schooners had been known to be loaded at the pier with cord wood alone in one day in addition to the lumber, shingles and tan bark that went over it.

In 1864, the burg was famous for its sidewalks of cord wood "All along the streets," said W. A. Woodworth an early settler, "where sidewalks should have been were immense piles of this wood." Darius Billings another settler who lived here during those times

THE SQUIER(S) FAMILY

said that the cord wood of 1864-65 was a mere shadow of what it had been previously, when not only the streets and piers were piled high, but the woods were also full of it.

The traffic that passed over the pier can hardly be realized at the present time. The lumber cut at the Hixington mill, two miles north of Fennville which was then only a swamp site, was drawn to Pier Cove to 1862 previous. After Fennville, then known as Fenn's Mills, was founded in 1862 until 1871 when the railroad was established the lumber and shingles from there went to market over this pier. The lumber from the Phillips mill that stood on the southeast quarter of section 11, ganges township was, also hauled to the pier for shipment. All of this was in addition to the cut of the Squiers mill at Pier Cove. All of this lumber, shingles, cord wood, tan bark and miscellaneous other freight created an immense amount of traffic at Pier Cove.

The first post office in western Allegan County was established there in 1854 two years after Mr. Squiers had settled there. Sam Thompson was the first post master. The post office was maintained at this place until 1882 when Martin Pratt moved it to the site of the ganges post office, of late years. In the early sixties there were four stores, a post office, a saloon, a hotel, the Squiers & Cronson saw mill, a blacksmith and a repair shop, a grist mill and also a fanning mill shop owned by H. H. Goodrich, which was on the flat behind the saw mill about in 1855 or 60.

In 1869 there were 10 streets, 139 lots in the survey, 34 buildings, including the four stores the post office the saloon a large hotel, the saw mill, the repair shop, the grist mill, a school at the southern limits and a church at the northern limits

THE SQUIER(S) FAMILY

of the village.

Among those who engaged in the mercantile business during the life of the burg were Messrs. Raymond, (father of Frank), Walter Billings, J. S. Payne, (who also owned the saloon), L. Weaver, A. C. Collins, and B. F. Hall.

Mrs. S. G. Fiegert, who came to ganges township in 1855 said in that year Giles Rockwell built the first part of the hotel at the Cove. Later he built another having a hall on the second floor. There is some difference of opinion as to the date the house was built.

This hotel was the only one in ganges township, and for a time was a popular assembling place for elections and social gatherings.

"On Christmas eve, 1871," said an old settler, "101 couples danced in the hotel hall, music being furnished by the Chase Orchestra", a local newspaper printed the following as of October 23, 1869. "The dance at Pier Cove was quite well attended and the participants seemed to enjoy themselves very much. We believe Mr. Cook, the proprietor, of the hotel, is well versed in keeping a public house."

The grist mill was probably the oldest and the last building of old Pier Cove remaining in more modern times. The sawmill, the stores, the post office, the hotel and the other buildings were built, served their purpose and fell into disuse, abandonment and then either went to pieces or were torn down. The last survivors were the old grist mills and the piers.

Between 1848 and 1853, Charles Richards came to Pier Cove, put a dam across the creek and set up a building and started a wood turning and furniture shop. After running the shop a few

THE SQUIER(S) FAMILY

years, he sold it to a Mr. Nichols who put in a mill stone on the second floor and converted this floor into the grist mill in about 1860. This mill changed hands several times until a Mr. Elderidge became the last owner who operated it.

He operated the flour and feed mill until the dam washed out about 1880 and the mill was never started again but remained as one of the old land marks of Pioneer days.

SAW MILL SOLD

The Squiers and Ceenonson saw mill was later sold to Raymond & Abbott. They operated it for some time. In 1869 the mill was sold to Fenn and Loomis and was moved to Fennville.

The removal of the saw mill to Fennville was the beginning of the end of old time Pier Cove. The cause of its removal was the lack of saw timber within reach of the mill. The cord wood and the tan bark also disappeared and the surrounding country had been worked over into agricultural and fruit land.

The railroad at Fennville had been placed in operation in 1871. Fennville was becoming active as a transportation and commercial center which eliminated the need to a great extent as a commercial outlet by way of the lake and there was little need left for the pier as a trading point.

MOVES TO FARM, DIED IN 1865

When Mr. Squiers disposed of his mill he had exchanged it for a farm in the same county located in the S.W. corner of section 32, Saugatuck township on the lake shore at the end of the town line between Saugatuck and ganges township. Here he built a home and lived with his family until his death which occurred

THE SQUIER(S) FAMILY

April 5, 1865.

ABIGAIL SQUIERS REMARRIED, DIED IN 1886

After the death of Mr. Squiers Mrs. Squiers sold her farm and moved back to Pier Cove with her family where she lived for many years with her daughters Annis and Ann, when the children went to school. Annis was married in this home to Wm. Kibby January 1, 18--.

It had been the habit of Harrison Hutchins of Pennville to distribute supplies of provisions and wood to the widows and unfortunates throughout the countryside. He never delivered them however, in person. It so happened that his brother Alvin, whose wife had died, made some of these deliveries to Mrs. Squiers. A friendship sprung up between them that culminated in their marriage December 25, 1877. She and her daughter Ann then moved to his home near Pennville where she lived until her death May 22, 1886.

END OF PIER COVE

One by one the stores closed and were torn down or were moved away. The blacksmith and repair shop was discontinued for want of patronage and the hotel ceased to operate. After 1880 that the church, post office and school were moved to what was later known as the Ganges corners. Although new piers were built in the later fruit era the old pier had gone out by way of the ice and the sea. All that remained to represent the business of former years was the old red grist mill which was being operated by its last owner Joseph Eldridge and which ceased to operate a little later when the dam was washed out.

The picturesque old structure stood for many years with its

THE SQUIER(S) FAMILY

great water wheel sagging away from its original position, a romantic reminder of an nearly forgotten past. The mill foundation finally crumbled away and the whole structure started to topple over into the pond.

In 1915 it gave way to a small cyclone and crumbled into a mass of broken boards and timbers.

In 1916, O. C. Symmons, of Chicago, the owner of the land was obliged to tear it down. Historic Pier Cove belonged to the ages, for it was no more.

