

# CALEB MERRITT (1760-1832)

The following was transcribed by: Connie Cotterill-Schumaker and sent in my Chuck Rockett.

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Sketches Reveal Bravery of Valley Pioneers  
Five Pennsylvania Families Float Down Ohio River in Flat Boat -- Land on Site of Herrold's Mill

By Will C. Merritt

In the year 1800, William Thomas and Johnathan Brooks Sr., Joshua Wood, Sr., and Caleb Merritt, Sr., with their respective families started from Merrittstown, Fayette county, Penn., to go "west," which were in those [sic] days applied chiefly to the eastern part of the Northwest Territory. They descended the Ohio in a flat-boat on board of which were their few household goods, tools, guns, etc., most essential in frontier life. They landed at the mouth of the Hock-Hocking [sic] and there hired two men to convey their goods up this river in a pirogue to a suitable place to settle, having for the objective the locality where Thomas Armstrong had preceded them and settled the year before. A pirogue is a large canoe, usually with boards nailed upright to hold more goods. Being high and narrow it was not as safe as a flat boat in swift water but could ascend where a boat could not. As they approached Bingham's mill, now called Herrold's mill, the pirogue was caught in an eddy and upset, losing all the household goods and provisions.

Recover Whiskey

The only article immediately recovered was a bottle of whisky which drifted to shore. A man by the name of John Havener then owned most of the land upon which Athens is now located. Mr. Brooks says he well remembers seeing the hill on which the court house stands, in a field of rye. At that time there were only about six families along the Hocking up to Bingham's mill. Some had settled there three years and some just the year before. Owing to the pirogue disaster the first winter was spent [sic] mostly with the Hocking neighbors who showed great hospitality. In the spring of 1801 the three Brooks Families and Joshua Wood settled about a mile east of where Albany is now located and Caleb Merritt settled near Hebbardsville on the farm now owned by Peter Vorhes.

Caleb Merritt is the great-grandfather of the writer on his father's side and Joshua Wood is the great-great-grandfather on his mother's side. A brief sketch of the five emigrants families coming via the Ohio river - Hocking Valley route in 1800 will be given.

Caleb Merritt, Sr.

Caleb Merritt, Sr., was born in New Jersey, March 8, 1760. They soon moved to Fayette county, Penn, and Merrittstown was named in their honor. May 7, 1797, Caleb married Mary Garwood. Both were Quakers. He moved to Ohio in 1800, and settled on Margaret's creek and later moved to Alexander. He was the first Justice of the Peace of Alexander township and performed the first marriage service in the township, uniting Justus Reynolds and a Miss Higgins. Squire Merritt was a devout Methodist. He died in 1832 leaving eight children, the oldest of whom was Caleb, Jr., who married Eunice Whitlock May 12, 1827.

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This family is detailed on our WHITLOCK09 chart. Eunice Whitlock was the daughter of Benjamin W. Whitlock and Abiah Higley who were married in Danbury, Connecticut Aug.19,1796. Caleb and Eunice had eight children and there are many descendants shown on the chart.

SOURCE: X6218