

Sensebach Heritage

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A family history newsletter for:

Sinsabaugh Sensibaugh Sensenbaugh Sinsebox
Sinsapaugh Sencabaugh Sencenbaugh Sencerbox
Sincebaugh Sencebaugh Sincerbeaux Sincerbox
Sensabaugh Sencibaugh Cincebeaux Sensaboy
Sensebaugh Cencebaugh Cincebox Senciboy
and other variations of the name

Crossroads - David Sinsabaugh of Norwich, Ohio

by Steven L. Sinsabaugh

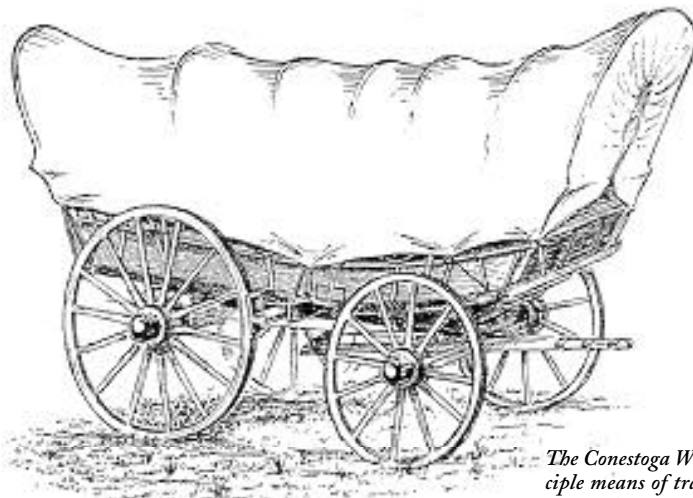
It has been said that genealogy is just the study of history on a microscopic scale. The events and movements we read about as students in dry history texts are just the 'bird's eye view' of the lives of hundreds, thousands, even millions of people living in their place and time. Genealogy provides the 'ant's eye' view, the view of history from the view of an individual and his family.

An excellent example of this genealogical perspective is the Civil War pension file series we run annually in this newsletter, in which we focus on the life and military record of a single soldier. The articles often include familiar names from our history classes -- people like Lee, Grant, and Sherman, and places like Antietam, Kennesaw Mountain, and Gettysburg. But these people and places are seen through the eyes of an ancestor for whom they were not history, but rather part of his life.

This genealogical perspective of history is not limited just to our soldier ancestors. A prime example of this is the story of David Sinsabaugh of Norwich, Ohio. His life touched upon two topics from antebellum American history: the National Road and the Underground Railroad.

Origins

Like many stories of the Sensebach family, we begin in New York, in the hills and kills just north of New York City. On 19 September 1802, at the Shawangunk Reformed Church in Ulster County, New York, Simeon Sinsabaugh and Hester Vanderlyn were married.¹ Simeon's father Frederick had died sixteen years earlier while he was still a child. Simeon's grandfather, Johann Christian Sensebach -- who had crossed the Atlantic with his family while only child himself -- had



The Conestoga Wagon was the principle means of transportation along the National Road.

died just three years previous. Simeon had certainly heard stories about the 'old country', as well as stories about life on the frontier, when that frontier was right there in New York.

The following spring, on 21 May 1803, Simeon and Hester's first child, David, was born. The next several years saw the birth of several more children, including Hiram. Simeon and his family appear on the 1810 census rolls of Ulster County, with two boys and two girls under age ten. Sometime between 1810 and 1816, the family moved to Greene County, Pennsylvania, where Simeon first appears on the tax records of Whitely Township. Greene County forms the southwest corner of the state. That first tax roll lists his property as 190 acres, two cabins, two horses, two cows and a dog. The tax amount on the dog is not recorded.

After his birth and baptism in New York, their eldest son David does not appear by name in any further records until he reaches age 24. In 1827 David first appears in Greene

County tax records, along with his father. David is listed as a peddler, without land, but owning a stud horse and two regular horses. In those days a peddler was a salesman who traveled with his wares. From his home base in the southwest corner of Pennsylvania, David was not far from the Virginia (later West Virginia) panhandle and from the Ohio River. Even if his travels as a peddler did not take him as far as Ohio, he would certainly have met many people on the nearby National Road migrating there. It isn't hard to imagine that the young David would see his future lay westward on that road.

The National Road

Before the advent of railroads in the young United States, those who wished to travel to new lands often had to travel by the very poor roads or on waterways. But in 1800 no waterways or decent roads existed across the Appalachian Mountains to take settlers to the new Ohio lands. The mountains separated the Potomac River in the east from the

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