

JOHN BONNELL

".. The death of John Bonnell, which occurred on the 21st of November, has been briefly chronicled. His demise was the close of a long life, dating back for nearly two generations, and is deserving of more than a passing notice. John Bonnell was born at the mouth of Paxton creek, then in Lancaster county, but now embraced in the first ward of the city of Harrisburg, on the 10th of June, 1780, making him at the time of his death, 91 years, 5 months and 11 days old. In the year 1791, his father and family removed from Paxton, to what was known as Lycoming township, Northumberland county, and settled on the farm now owned by Rev. Joseph Stevens, located on the bank of the river above the borough of Jersey Shore. At this time Lycoming county had not been formed, few improvements had been made, and the rich valley of the West Branch was a comparative wilderness.

But it seems that the family did not long remain on this farm, for, in 1800, they emigrated to Erie, passing through the wild fastnesses of the Allegheny mountains. There were few roads in those days, and the forests were full of wild animals, making the journey anything but pleasant. From some cause or other the subject of this sketch was dissatisfied with his home on the shores of the lake, and in 1802 he returned to the valley of the West Branch. Soon afterwards he was united in marriage to Miss Catharine Miller, daughter of William Miller, who then resided on the same farm on Pine creek, where deceased breathed his last on 21st of November, 1874. Soon after his marriage he

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removed, with his wife, to the second fork of Pine creek, in company with his brother George, supposing that the land was vacant. In course of time he discovered his error, and in 1812 returned and purchased of the trustee of Henry Rooker the farm where he spent the last sixty-two years of his life, distant from the borough of Jersey Shore about eight miles.

Mr. Bonnell was, perhaps, at the time of his death, the oldest member of the Methodist Episcopal church in Lycoming county, having been received into its folds by Rev. Timothy Lee, in the year 1806. He enjoyed an extensive acquaintance in Watson township and the entire upper end of this county. When settled in that region, more than seventy years ago, the country was a wilderness and much hard labor was required to clear away the primitive forests and open up a farm.

The Bonnell family has been distinguished for great longevity. Deceased had three brothers, Thomas, George and William, all of whom lived until they were over ninety five years of age. Their father, John Bonnell, was a native of Dublin, Ireland, and emigrated to the Province of Pennsylvania in 1771 - just one hundred years ago. He served as a soldier in the Provincial and United States army during a greater part of the revolution, and participated in many skirmishes and engagements. He lived to a great age, but the *exact* time of his death is unknown. .."

Reference:

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