

## [Murdock, Seymour]

Seymour Murdock, Soldier of [the] Revolution, Settled on the Ridge Road

In the West Ridgeway cemetery is the grave of a Revolutionary soldier, Seymour Murdock, which has just been marked by Orleans Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. The Rev. Lincoln L. Rogers of Medina, a former Methodist Episcopal church pastor in Batavia, officiated as chaplain of Lemuel Cook Chapter of the S.A.R. [Sons of the American Revolution] at the ceremonies. Mrs. James Small, regent of Orleans Chapter, D.A.R., made remarks, and a quartette composed of Mrs. William Luttenton, Mrs. A. W. Bliss, Mrs. Myron Babbitt and Mrs. Clayton Blood sang "America the Beautiful." Mrs. Fred Gray, great-grand-daughter of Mr. Murdock, wrote a sketch of his life.

Seymour Murdock was born on December 11, 1763 in Dutchess county, this state. His ancestors were of Scottish descent, and his father, John Murdock, lived at Preston, Conn.

Answering his country's call, Seymour and two of his brothers enlisted, he serving in the 6th Regiment, Dutchess county Militia. In 1795 or 6, he married Catherine Buch of American, N.Y., and lived in Greene county for a time. Some years later Mr. Murdock decided to make a new home for his family in Western New York, where he had heard that a new section was being opened up. So, in the spring of 1810, he with his wife and twelve children, eight boys and four girls, started in a Pennsylvania wagon with an ox team, for their future home to locate wherever they found a place to their liking. Traveling was very difficult, as it was an almost unbroken, dense forest, and they encountered many hardships.

At Avon he left his family and with his oldest son started on foot for Batavia, office of the Holland Land Co., which was settling land grants, and some settlements had already been made along the famous Ridge Road. Then they traveled on to Buffalo, along the Niagara River to Lewiston, and east along this natural ridge to about two miles beyond the present Niagara county line, where they came upon two men eating by a tree they had just felled. Liking this location, they purchased from these men the right to their claim in May, 1810. Then they returned to Avon for the family.

The oldest daughter declared she would go no further into the wilderness and was left at Avon, but she followed them later and lived in Niagara county.

Taking the rest of his family, he started for his future home in Ridgeway. They found it difficult crossing both Otter and Oak Creeks, on account of the high banks. On going up the west bank of Oak Orchard Creek, one of the boys fell out of the wagon, and was not missed until his cries were heard. They were over a month on the way, and finally reached their new home June 1, 1810.

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Their first meal was eaten around a stump, and without doubt, was eaten with a relish. They lived in their wagon for six weeks, while a cabin was being built. This cabin was on the south side of the Ridge road west of Ridgeway Corners, on the east part of the farm now in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Gray. Mrs. Gray is a great-granddaughter.

The nearest store and postoffice were at Batavia, the nearest grist mill was at Niagara Falls, and at Johnson Creek, five miles away, lived their nearest neighbor. Such was the home to which he brought his family and was the first permanent [one] in the town of Ridgeway.

In 1813, Mr. Murdock built the first framed barn in the town. The timbers were very heavy and there being only a few settlers to help raise the frame, he asked Gen. Izard, who was passing with his regiment on their way to Fort Niagara, to have his men assist, which he did. This barn is in good condition at the present time, after one hundred and fifteen years. It is just east of where the cabin stood, and is owned and used by Jay Blackburn. In the same year, Mr. Murdock's daughter taught the first school in the town of Ridgeway in this barn.

By his sterling integrity and perseverance he became a prosperous farmer. All of his children married and settled on farms nearby except John, who was a farmer in Gaines. His son, Seymour B., kept a portion of the home farm, and lived upon it until a few years before his death.

The mother died in Sept., 1823, and Seymour, the father, ten years later, April 14, 1833, aged 69 years. His life was probably shortened by the hardships of the early pioneer life; but it was a life of service to his family, the community and to his country.

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Transcriber's note: Seymour Murdock was deeply interested in Universalism and in the the formation of a Universalist society, but he died before the meeting was held to officially organize the new congregation.

Transcribed on 23 Mar 2024 by Karen E. Dau of East Rochester, NY