

[Northrop, Fannie Brooks]

From "Early Days in Perinton"

Compiled by the Perinton Historical Society

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To me the most interesting character of my childhood was "Old Granny." She was Mrs. Fannie Northrop, mother of Elvira Northrop Wilcox, who was my grandmother. She used to tell me Indian stories when I was a little fellow and was by far the most interesting character of them all. To my knowledge this old lady never smoked a pipe, strange as this may seem. In a history of Fairport, I believe she would be considered one of the most interesting characters. She was born on the old Brooks farm—later the Watson farm—about three miles north and a little east of Fairport, near Penfield, December 5, 1808, and died in Fairport December 9, 1901. She was the youngest child of Thomas and Esther Brooks. Thomas Brooks was a soldier in the Revolutionary War, a drummer in Washington's personal staff. He ran away from Dartmouth college where he was studying for the ministry and enlisted with Washington. [He] Being a mere boy, his father forced him to return to college, but he again ran away and enlisted with no further parental objection.

The Brookses were among the earliest settlers in Fairport. At the age of 17 Fannie Brooks married Burton Northrop, and he brought her as a bride to their unfinished home on Church street. They hung blankets at the doors and windows as the house had not yet been completed. The "bridal trip" from the old Brooks home to the new home, not more than four or five miles away, required over a week's time as the bride and groom were wined and dined by friends and neighbors all along the road. Indians were still living in the country at that time, and many a night "Old Granny" lulled me to a horrified sleep when I was a little boy by telling me of the drunken Indians chasing her through the woods. She was a typical pioneer woman, and her early life of hardship and sacrifice showed up in her strong, resolute, God-fearing character. She was a member of the Universalist church. She died [on] December 9, 1901, and on the same day her daughter Elvira, my grandmother, who had been attending her constantly during her last illness, also died of pneumonia. Mother and daughter were buried, with a double funeral, at the old home on Church street, on December 13, 1901.

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