

DEATH OF ELLIS ASKEY

Venerable Citizen of Ridott
Dies at the Age of
83 Years.

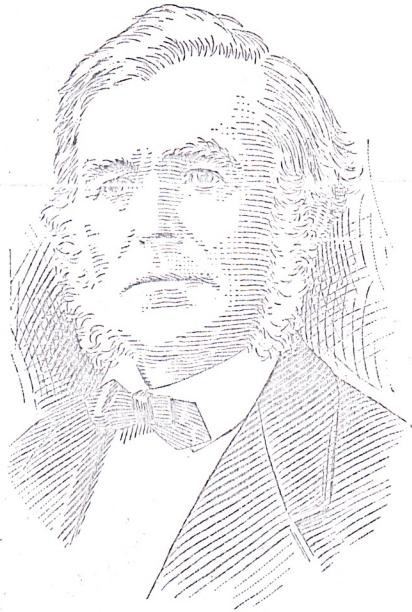
A Biographical Sketch of One of Stephenson County's Oldest Citizens.

BORN IN PENNSYLVANIA.

Honorable Roll of Ancestors Who Fought in French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars.

Pale twin of sleep, why do men dread to
meet thee?
For all earth's ills, thy anodyne is best.
Come gently, death, then weary life shall
greet thee,
As greets the sun the rosy curtained west.

Ellis Askey, one of the oldest residents of Ridott and one of the best loved men in Stephenson county, died Wednesday, Jan. 17, 1900, at 10 o'clock. His age was over 83 years. The cause of his death was rheumatism.



THE LATE ELLIS ASKEY.

Ellis Askey was born near Howard in Bald Eagle township, Center county, Pa., Oct. 6, 1816; died at Ridott, Stephenson county, Ill., Jan. 17, 1900.

He was married in Center county, Pa., to Miss Eliza Fox Nov. 7, 1841. She died at their home in Ridott, Ill., on June 6, 1892. Their children, two: Lizzie, widow of Herman Shellenberger, Red Oak, Iowa; John T., Iowa; F. M. and Albert Askey of Ridott, Ill.; Mary, wife of William Beard, Maywood, Ill. Two children, Nelson and Orpha, died in infancy.

Ellis Askey is the fourth and last survivor of the sons of John Askey. The latter was also born in the old homestead near Howard, Pa., A. D. 1772, died at the same place, from injuries received from a spirited horse, Sept. 30, 1839, at the age of 68 years. The maiden name of his wife, mother of Ellis, was Miss Elizabeth Evans of Scotch-Irish descent. She died at the old homestead Aug. 11, 1868, aged 84 years, 3 months and 23 days.

Ellis Askey is of a family of eleven children, six

son, F. M. Askey.

Ellis, affectionately known as Father Askey, was one of nature's noblemen—a gentleman of the old school, the representatives of which are rapidly vanishing. He was of a genial and hospitable disposition, never so well pleased as when dispensing his liberality and good will to those with whom he was associated.

His beloved face was an index to his character. His dark hazel eyes—the windows of his soul—would beam when pleased, and flash with excitement when aroused. He was quick in action, loathed with contempt anything low and degrading and his firm set lips were not slow in giving expression to his thoughts. His voice, in accord, was ever on the side of the helpless and many are living who will have cause to mourn his departure. He rounded out more than a half century of his life in the neighborhood where death claimed him, and his highest eulogy is the good words and deep feeling expressed by all that a truly good and upright man has to say—an untaught record upon the scroll of time—a noble example to his children, relatives and friends.

His ancestry—comes of rugged Scotch-Irish revolutionaries, paternal and maternal—whose history is traced in the annals of the earliest settlements of central Pennsylvania.

I quote from Pennsylvania Historical collections, page 23: "In 1763 General Gage had determined to repel the invasion of the Indians by carrying the war into their own country and Col. Bouquet was to proceed with a small army against the Delawares and Shawnees beyond the Ohio. Mark the following: Id. 'It creates a feeling of sadness to know that this grandson of William Penn, in the city of brotherly love itself in July, 1764, offered by proclamation, etc., the following bounties for the capture or scalps and death of Indians ranging from \$50 to \$100, according to age or victim.'

"O! Q am mutatus ab illis!" Id. "Bouquet's expedition to the Muskingum in the autumn of 1764 overawed the Indians who sued for peace, etc." The foregoing is quoted as an introduction for what is to follow:

In the "Annals of Buffalo Valley, 1755-1855" p. 26 and 7 I quote—"Nov. 5, 1768—on the 5th of Nov. 1768, Thomas and Richard Penn purchased from the six nations at Fort Stanwix (now Rome, N. Y.) the remainder of the valley whose annals we are writing. As one of the incentives to this purchase, I may state that as early as the year 1764, the officers of the first and second battalions who served under Col. Bouquet, made an agreement with each other in writing at Bedford that they would apply to the proprietaries for a tract of land sufficiently extensive and conveniently situated wherein to erect a compact and defensible town and also to accommodate each with a reasonable and commodious plantation, whereby their industry they might procure a comfortable subsistence for themselves and by their arms and increase become a powerful barrier to the province, and they therefore prayed the proprietaries to make the purchase and make them a grant of forty thousand (40,000) acres of valuable land on the west branch of the Susquehanna. The mementoes of the association are published in full in the first volume of the collections of the Historical society of Pennsylvania,

Feb. 3, 1769, the commissioners of the officers of the first and second battalions met at the governor's and obtained an order, allowing them to take up twenty-four thousand (24,000) acres to be divided among them in district surveys on the waters of the west branch of the Susquehanna, each three hundred (300) acres to be seated with a family within two (2) years from the time of survey, paying £5 sterling per hundred and one penny per acre, etc. Among the names of the officers in whose favor the order of survey issued were Col. Francis Major de Haas. (Id. p. 0.) In the latter part of February many of the officers of the first and second battalions met at Fort Augusta and agreed to take the land upon the terms proposed by the proprietaries and that one of the tracks should be surveyed on the west branch adjoining Montour's place (Chillisquaque Creek) and one in Buffalo Valley. In order to expedite business it was agreed that Capts. Plunkett, Piper, Brady and Lieut. Askey should go along with Mr. McClay to Buffalo Valley and Capt. S. Hunter and Irvine with Mr. Sull to direct the survey in the Forks. (Id. May 16, 1769.) Lots were drawn for the choice of lands, Lieut. Askey chose the site of Mifflinburg.

Id. p. 36, March 9, 1771. The officers of the first and second battalions held another meeting. Chas Lukens reported that the whole tract surveyed by him on Bald Eagle creek contained only eight thousand three hundred and eighty (8,380) acres which is 1,524 acres less than the quantity allowed them. He divided the Bald Eagle tract into twenty shares, the last of which Lieut. Askey got.

These surveys are recorded as the officers surveys in the new purchase. Major de Hass, one of the officers mentioned, located his tract adjoining Lieut. Askey. Bear in mind that the foregoing history is previous to the revolutionary war—the officers were the actors in the French and Indian war.

(Historical collections p. 201.) Few details of the adventures of the early settlers of Center county, Pa., have been preserved. Prior to the revolution most of the country was comprised in Bald Eagle and Potter Townships of Northumberland county and its history is interwoven with that of the lower settlements on the West Branch.

History says that Capt. John Askey, another soldier of the revolutionary war, etc., with McGee and others, located near where the village of Howard is now in 1772. The first settlers of the county were, as a general thing, people of education and ability. I quote the foregoing in order to correct the statement with reference to Capt. Askey. The pioneer's name was Thomas, not John as stated. He was Lieut. Askey of the French and Indian war and also Capt. Askey of

Bald Eagle, who was bold and fearless, had his wigwam and his house on the banks of the stream of that name near where Milesburg now stands, in Centre county, in the midst of an Indian village, which is called the Bald Eagle Nest, led the party of savages in 1778 that murdered James Brady, son of Capt. John Brady and younger brother of the brave Sam Brady of the rangers, in a harvest field along with his fellow-laborers a short distance below the present site of Williamsport. Wounded with a spear, tomahawk and scalped, young Brady still lived long enough to describe the horrible scene with great minuteness.

He said the Indians were led by Bald Eagle. "Vengeance not loud but deep," says the historian, "was breathed against Bald Eagle, but he laughed it to scorn till the fatal day at Brady's Bend on the Allegheny." Hazzard in his Register of Pennsylvania, vol. 9, p. 237, gives the following account of the death of the celebrated chief: "Several years after the death of James Brady a large party of Senecas were marching along the Allegheny river on their way to Bald Eagle Nest. Capt. Sam Brady recognized Bald Eagle that day and fired at him. When the battle was over he searched for his body and found it. The ball had pierced his heart and the blood of the young captain at Loyal rock was fatal, avenged by the hands of his brother on the banks of the Allegheny."

There is nothing on record, and not a tradition to prove that Bald Eagle was ever anything but an enemy to the whites; yet they have honored him and perpetuated his name by conferring it upon an extensive valley, a beautiful stream and a grand range of mountains. The fines point of view is from the elevation on the old Askey home-stand where the house now stands.

Grandmother Askey, mother of Ellis Askey, was a prim unassuming little lady, and a favorite with her grandchildren. She lived to a ripe old age and retained her mental faculties unimpaired to the close of life. Often has the writer sat, gathering from her lips the incidents and hardships of a pioneer's life, of the time when the grandmother of Ellis was rearing her family on the banks of the Bald Eagle, while her husband was in the army, when she had for neighbors the Mileses, the Boggses and the Harts, etc., of the time when she gathered her children and hastened to the woods and remained concealed overnight, listening to the whoops and howls of Bald Eagle's savages who she imagined were massacring her friends and neighbors. When the morning dawned she saw an Indian whom she knew and who had been friendly, approaching and passing her place of concealment on his way to her habitation. His appearance and movements did not indicate that he was on the war path and she made known to him her presence, when he informed her that his tribe was exacting capital punishment upon an Indian of another tribe, by stoning him to death. This was about the time when the Indians were preparing to go on the warpath, and it was necessary to be on the alert for fear of treachery. Finally in the year 1778 the alarm was given to the inhabitants on the frontier, to flee to the settlements further east in order to escape the tomahawk and scalping knife. This flight is recorded as the "Big Runaway."

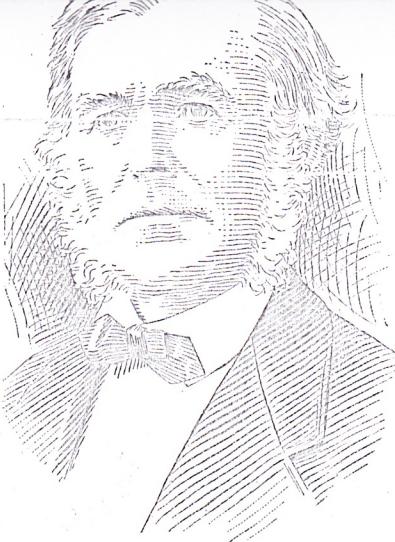
She maritaled her family and hastened to her former home in Path Valley. She remained in Path Valley till the close of the revolutionary war, when in company with her husband and family, returned to their homestead in Bald Eagle Valley. Capt. Askey received pay for his services in the revolutionary war to continue during which very soon became worthless, thus leaving him, as was the case with thousands of soldiers of that war, comparatively poor in his declining years. The names of his sons were Robert, William, David, John, (father of Ellis) Samuel and James—may not be named to the order of birth. Robert however was the oldest, so the son referred to as being in Gen'l Wayne's army when operating against the Indians in Ohio. The writer knows nothing further than the names of William and David, given by Ellis.

Samuel, known as Uncle Sam, was the pioneer of Snowshoe, having settled there in 1818. His record would fill a volume. He was with the army on the banks of Lake Erie when Commodore Perry with his vessels went forth to engage the enemy. He was not permitted to go along with the gallant men on account of having a wife and family—only single men were taken. He was a witness of the engagement, however, and one of the first to go on board after the engagement with dispatches for the commodore. He was a noted hunter and trapper in the Alleghenies—a destroyer of the wild and savage beasts that roamed the forests, the record of which, in payment of bounties for scalps, were published at the time of his death, probably not exceeded by any hunter in central Pennsylvania.

He bore the scars on his body to the grave received from the claws of a panther with which he engaged in a terrific encounter with a knife and with the aid of his dogs, he destroyed James in manhood, leaving a widow, who afterward became the wife of Col. William McKibben and mother of Joseph, Thompson and Jesse McKibben, all of whom resided in this county, Joseph, still living in Freeport, Pa. She died at Ridott, Ill., at an advanced age. Capt. Askey had three daughters, two of whom were married to Chas. Lukens, the name being afterward changed to Lucas. Another daughter married a man by the name of Turner—nine children in all.

This biography of Thomas Askey, the pioneer, is not yet a part of the history of Center county as far as known to the writer. A portion of the material is gathered and verified as will be seen from the "Annals of Buffalo Valley," taken from Vol. II historical collections of Pennsylvania.

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Ellis Askey is the fourth and last survivor of the sons of John Askey. The latter was also born in the old homestead near Howard, Pa., A. D. 1772, died at the same place, from injuries received by a spirited horse, Sept. 25, 1829, at the age of 68 years. The maiden name of his wife, mother of Ellis, was Miss Elizabeth Evans of Scotch-Irish descent. She died at the old homestead Aug. 11, 1868, aged 81 years, 3 months and 23 days.

Ellis Askey is of a family of eleven children, six sons and five daughters, all born in the old homestead, namely: William, born Feb. 5, 1801, died at home July 23, 1827; Thomas, born Nov. 10, 1805, was a resident of Rock Grove, Stephenson county, Illinois, at the time of his death which occurred in 1875; John, born Oct. 19, 1807, died at Nittany Hall, Pa., Aug. 11, 1890; Rachel (Mrs. Snively) born March 24, 1810, died at Nittany Hall, Pa., in 1894; Eliza, (Mrs. McKibben) born June 28, 1812, died at Cedar Springs, Clinton county, Pa., Feb. 19, 1897; Mary Ann, (Mrs. Reber) born July 29, 1814, died at Howard, Pa.; Ellis, born Oct. 6, 1816; Rebecca, (Mrs. Beachdale) born Nov. 18, 1818, died at Beech Creek, Pa., Aug. 9, 1855; Nelson, born May 6, 1821, died at Williamsport, Pa.; Orpha, (Mrs. Pletcher) still living at Mount Eagle, Pa., born Feb. 17, 1825; Armstrong, born Aug. 17, 1827, died at Jackson, Amador county, California.

Ellis Askey made his first trip from Pennsylvania to Illinois with horse and buggy in 1846 in company with Mr. John Swanzey who was a cherished friend and neighbor until his death. Mr. Swanzey remained in the west. Ellis Askey returned to the east for his family and moved to Stephenson county in 1849, located upon his farm south of the village of Ridott, now occupied by his

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Thomas Askey, the pioneer, served during the Revolution as an officer under that noble, ardent and daring Gen. Wayne, with whom he was a personal friend and of whom he was a great admirer. His oldest son Robert also served under Wayne in later years against the Indians. Gen. Wayne was known to the Indians as "Mad Anthony."

Capt. Askey was in the army facing the British invaders at a time when his wife and family in their habitation, where, nightly could be heard, in those days, the howl of the wolf and the cry of the panther, exposed to the tomahawk and scalping knife of the ruthless savages under their noted chieftain, Bald Eagle, upon the banks of the stream that bears his name—a chief that showed no mercy to the white race.

It will be remembered that Lieut. Askey was a co-worker and companion of Captain John Brady.

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*This was my Great
Grandfather - Betty Morgan Madison*