

# TROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## THE KESSLER FAMILY REUNION

By David Smallenbarger

The year was 1906, Teddy Roosevelt was President and he asked the American people to walk softly and carry a big stick.

Nineteen and six, was six years following the Spanish American War, and forty one years following the Civil War. The wars were still fresh in the memories of millions of people.

It was also a time for the annual ritual of the Kessler family, the family reunion.

The reunion in that by gone year, was held at the farm home of Mr. and Mrs. David Kessler, located south of Kessler Station and north of Route 571. The David Kesslers were the parents of ten children, thus helping to insure a most successful gathering.

This was one of the largest reunions in family history, with forty three children and one hundred and forty five adults attending.

As in past years, this particular family gathering was held in the summer, usually on a Sunday.

The wagons and buggies streamed into the barnyard of the Kessler farm carrying mom and dad and all the kids, plus a mound of food, that the ladies of the large family had been preparing for a week. The menu consisted of potato salad, fresh baked bread, devil eggs, fried chicken, meat loaf, among other food items.

The food was placed on the tables on clean white linen and the ladies were kept busy swatting flies off the food, while the children played and the men retired to their own private groups. Where they discussed crops, Republican politics and the business and rituals of the Odd Fellows and Masonic Lodge.

Around noon the children were becoming restless and the adults were wondering to themselves, when dinner would be served.

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Finally the long awaited call would ring forth, that dinner was on the tables. David Kessler usually returned the thanks and the meal was served.

Following the feast, when a lot of the men wanted to kick off their shoes and lay in the grass, a short business meeting was held instead, with the same officers re-elected, year after year.

As the after noon was slipping away, and the sun was starting to set casting a colorful glow on the corn and wheat fields, and dusk was coming fast, the buggies and wagons were loaded with their respective families and left over food, and everybody started for home, to do their evening chores, because many were farmers.

The good byes were said, new friends made with the promises "That we will see you next year at the reunion", and be sure "to come for our Christmas dinner".

As the buggies and wagons left out the barnyard pulled by teams of trusted horses, each person thought to themselves "this was the best reunion I ever attended and the gossip that I learned".

The Kessler family, which at one time was one of the largest families in Miami County was strong on family tradition, which was evident by the large group of off springs. Some of whom became Judges, factory workers, farmers and a few outlaws.

Many members of the Kessler family resided in Kessler station for many years. This family has the distinct honor, of having this small hamlet named after the family which is located north of Nashville on the Troy-Frederick Road.

At one time it housed a grain elevator, a train depot, a farm implement store, a general store, a barber shop, a doctor, and a community band. The barber shop burned to the ground when a chicken caught fire, and she decided that she did not want to fry by himself.

Kessler Station, also known as "Turkey Foot", because the roads that feed into the small hamlet, resembled a turkey foot.

The Kesslers were able to absorb into their ranks by marriage, such names as Emerick, Fagin, Cress, Younce, Smallenbarger, Foxes, Isenbargers, Hoovers, Fouts, Winslows and others.

From this gathering of eighty six years, one person survives. He is Harold Smallenbarger, who attended as a kid with his brothers and sisters and parents, Daniel Adams and Etta Kessler. Macy Smallenbarger. The lone survivor is ninety one years of age and resides in Troy, Ohio.