

JOHN

J. W. Kessler, oldest son of Henry and Serene Goings Kessler, was born Jan., 7, 1835 one mile east of Kessler. My memory runs back to my childhood days, when there was six acres of land cleared on his property (160 acres). Those six acres were adjoining the house on the North. I recollect of seeing tame deer. They would come into our door yard and I would break off for the deer. My father would take his flint lock rifle and bring in three or four turkeys at a time, Squirrels were so plenty that my father would go around his patch of corn and shoot them and leave them ~~hay~~ so there were a stench all around the field. I recollect of three Indians coming to our house one morning bringing in a large dog and his head was full of porcupine quills and they told our father if he would pull the quills out of his head he might have the dog, so he fastened his head under the fence between the rails and pulled them out and mother prepared breakfast for them and they departed. The dog proved to be a good coon dog. He was a bull with short ears. When ~~the~~ boy, I would assist my father to burn logs and log heap that were heaped together from previous log rollings, which were prevalent in those days. By this time I had a sister, born August 17, 1837. Her name was Mary Ann. She went by the name of Siss in the family. In fact, all her life. I was always called Runt for I was very small as to my age. It was Hohn and Siss, we were called. By this time, had a brother born July 28, 1839. He was named David Andrew, also a sister born May 14, 1841, her name was Susan Elizabeth. The second brother born March 23, 1843. By this time, I had started to school. I had one mile to go and the greater part of it was through the woods. My school was a log house, 20 by 24, seats all around the wall, desk in front and slab seats in front of desks. I sat near the door. The teachers name was Lucius Peck, He was an English man. He kept his gads setting in the corner of the cabin. My seat was not far from the door, slab seat. There was a family the name of Triterpa and there were three young men brothers. In the meantime, when I was six years old I was sent to Sabbath School at the little burg which was called Nashville. The Methodists and Presbyterians builded a frame church 40 by 80 feet. John B. Kessler was Methodist and took an active part in those days. He was an exhorter called by the church. David Jenkins was a Presbyterian. They at the time were the leaders of the church house. I remember of David Jenkins taking me upon his knees and telling me of the goodness of Our Heavenly Father and how He loved little children. I have never forgotten him, nor his admonitions. Others more prominent were Israel Kessler, Martin Kessler, Henry Neal, Elizabeth Kessler, Henrietta Neal and others. I only remember one minister by the name of Rice, from Troy. In the time I remember of prayer meetings held in the vicinity, of Evenings held at homes, one every week. I remember of it being held at our home. Another sister, being born July 12, 1845. Come back again to my boyhood days and school in 1847, our log house had become too small. School houses then were built by subscription. There was a committee chosen to solicit subscription for a new house. Israel Kessler was chosen solicitor and my father, Henry Kessler was chosen Treasurer. The necessary funds were raised and they built a frame, 30 by 60, built by Peck, our teacher. Built with elevated seats, more modern than the old log house. We surely felt at home. Peck taught the first school and it numbered 50 to 60. Here I got acquainted with Harriett Puterbaugh, which after, became my wife in March 31, 1858. Peck taught again 1848, with great success, we only had 3 months school in the beginning. In 1848, we had four months. Peck taught again in 1849, with the school increas-

ing in numbers. Another brother was born Jan. 27, 1848 but dies in 1849. I now had a brother and sister going with me to school, David and Mary, Sis, as we called her. In 1850, school was taught by Isaac Davis, father of the late Losson Davis, deceased. Another brother born Jan. 31, 1850, Michael M. Kessler. At this time is poorly, mind affected. 1851, school was taught by George Miller, living in this district, adjoining ours on the north. A single man. On the 6th of June, my grandmother Kessler, died. Her name was Sarah Feese, nee Kessler. I was then about 14 years old, beginning to help my father farm. My first experience in the cornfields was one horse and a single shovelplow and the horse I used was named Dick. a beautiful pacer. We then went 3 times between rows of previous plowing corn, I dropped corn by hand. My father with the hoe and cover. I remember of me and my father helping Grandfather Kessler to plant corn after we had ours planted. He had the Dutchman that just arrived from Germany. His name was Peter Moser, he was a gay cude. In 1852, our school was taught by Peck again and we had a very large school from 70 to 80. I remember of hearing classes recite their lessons frequently, those that had attended classes with me, some of them had ~~the~~ grown. On Nov. 1, 1852, another brother was born, Martin S. Kessler. I remember my father purchased for me the first fifth reader that went into the school. It was called the Historical Guide. I recited alone that winter. That winter there were six in the class. At this, there was a strife for the best speller between myself and George Vore, Jesse Burkett, William Knife, Harrison Kessler and Anna Vore. We had spelling match every Friday afternoon. In 1853, school was taught by Peck again and the school was increased so much in number of pupils that it was found necessary to employ an assistant teacher and they employed a lady teacher from Troy by the name of Matilda Underwood. There was a young man made application to attend our school by the name of Pickering a fine young man and as some of us were good spellers, he got Peck, willing to take us to West Milton. Pickering lived at West Milton, so he left a challenge for our school. We knew that Milton had good spellers, Wm. I. Tenney, Louise Tenney and some of the Kelly and others, so on the date, we were taken to Milton in the two horse sled and it was filled with young women and young men, but chose George ~~Barrett~~ Vore, Jessie Burkett and myself to spell against them. The captain of the Milton team got a little mixed and George Vore was on the Milton side, so they proceeded. I spelled two hours and on the Milton side, George was the only one up and myself on the opposite side, in the meantime, I had spelled W. I. Tenney down, so we proceeded and now Vore continued to spell. Finally the teacher took us to the Webster's Dictionary and I spelled George down. So the Nashville School was champion. It pleased Pickering very much, also the teacher. So we got a banter from the Old Union Church, southwest of Troy, one mile. By appointment, a sled load of us and Peck met the school and I spelled the whole school down. Peck was a good musician, especially the clarinet and I lost the mouthpiece but found it the next morning, in the sled. Aaron Thomas was there and he was a good singer, Peck led ~~the school~~ with the clarinet. In the spring of 1854, the school planned for the exhibition, so the speakers were selected, our pieces and dialogues were selected and we went practicing upon the subjects allotted unto us. My selection was called, The North American Indians. I can repeat it today and it has been 65 years ago. It concerned the Indians being driven from the country to the far West. Also had a dialogue

between myself and Harrison Kessler. He was the politician and I was the editor, a grand dialogue. He was the son of Uncle Israel. Our school house not being large enough we secured the Presbyterian (Old) Church across the road to hold the exhibition. The time came around and we employed the services of the Milton Band. A platform was erected in the back part of the church for the band. Curtain in front and was grand. I was chosen for the introductory remarks. I will never forget it. I was a little nervous, this in March, 1855. My sister Mary was married the previous October. August 1, another brother was born, his name was Charles. Peck then taught again until in the spring of '56 when school closed. Peck taught a select school north of us 4 miles, known as the Fenner district and west of Troy, 4 or 5 miles. I was one of the pupils. Father paid the tuition and also I boarded with long Joseph Furnas and he had two daughters that accompanied me to the school. One of the daughters, Sarah Furnas, well, travelled around the world, there were 18 girls and 2 boys attended the school. The boys were myself and David Kelly of Troy, Ohio. I do not know of any of them living except Martha Duncan nee Langston. David Kelly was mortally wounded in the Rebellion and died. I and Davis surely did have good times with the girls at school. David kept a book store in Troy. We studied arithmetic, algebra, reading, spelling and writing. School was at night. Here is where I received my best education when school closed. I now became of age 21, helped my father some of the remaining summer. I attended singing school on Sunday afternoon at 12:00 p.m. thought the old patent note, he was a good singer. The school was taught by my uncle Martin Kessler at the Old Presbyterian Church. I also attended church at the Old West Union, one mile east of West Milton. At that time called the Fouts Church. In those days, there were apple cutting and apple butter making. We young people had a good social time and escort them home this is a campaign year but I was not old enough to vote but I was in the rallies just the same, it was the Fremont and Buchanan. I yelled for Fremont, Republican. Buchanan was elected on 1857. I farmed 12 acres of corn for myself on my father's farm. Also helped him to cut and saw walnut logs for a new house. He wanted his house built of walnut timbers. That fall I helped my grandfather was cooper stuff. Helped two months that winter cut cord wood for Uncle John Miller. In the fall of 1857, I had chills and fever what they called those days ague. It was very prevalent at that time. I cut corn for my father up to the 28th of Sept. That morning there was a large killing frost. The evening before I sat up with Samuel Puterbaugh, a brother to my wife, he died on the 28th day of Sept. I got the chills, broke and Oct 2, I went to visit my grandfather Goings, who lived near London, Clark Co., Ohio. I stayed 2 weeks and came home, from that time I helped Uncle John Miller cut cordwood. March 28, Uncle John had log roll and were 60 hands present. They divided in two teams, the old man squad and the young man squad, I was chosen Captain of the young man's squad. This was on Wednesday. I had my marriage license in pocket at time when we quit in the evening. I went to my father's and changed clothes and proceeded to George Puterbaughs where I was married to his daughter, Harriett. By Elder Ohillip Yoynce of Dunkard Church, the next morning we took the train at Tippecanoe City and went to London, Ohio, visiting relatives, Uncles and Aunts, stayed there a few days and returned to Springfield, Ohio. From there to Yellow Springs, being acquainted with the professor Eli Jay and wife, was with them 3 days, then to Dayton, O. and to my father's, we enjoyed the trip very much and then next to her father's, gone 10 days. In relating who

who married us, Phillip Yonce, he only lived about 400 yds. from my fathers home and was at least once or twice a week he often would carry me upon his back to his home, he called me his Johnny, now this was when I was 10 yrs. old. He was gone a great deal of time, preaching funerals. He always rode horseback, green saddle bags and leggings the closest church was Englewood and Painter Creek, Darke Co.. Them day there were no bridges across the streams and he ~~666~~-- them and got very cold.

I recollect being there one evening when he arrived home from a funeral at Painter Creek it was very cold and his boots were so frozen he could not pull them off and his son in law, Henry Hammel, laid him down by the large fire place and thawed his boots loose so he could get them off. His wife, we called her Aunt Peggy, was a mid-wife. Now back to our marriage, March 31, 1858, We stayed with her mother and father because they had no one else to assist them. She did the wash and helped with the house work. I helped my father in law on the farm Harriett did all kinds of farm work. In the fall I sowed 20 acres of wheat on his 80 acres and stayed with them until Spring. March 23, our first child was born and was named Owen Edgar, that being 1859, I still farmed that place, March, 1860. I rented a farm east of Ludlow Falls and in ~~the~~ 1860, I moved west of Milton, 3 miles and on the 9 of May, a daughter was born unto us and she was named Sarah Dora. That spring was the Rebellion. I enlisted in the 48th Regiment. I was examined and discharged on account of my eye. 1862, I moved to the Burkett farm on Stillwater and paid cash rent. Was there 2 years, on the 9th of May another daughter was born, named her Alice. I reunited with the Methodist church 1860 at Kessler Chapel under the labor of George H. Kenedy, was taken on probation after 6 months. I was baptized and taken into the Church, The spring of 1864, I farmed some of my fathers farm and in the fall I bought an 80 acre farm of G. A. Pierce, that was 1865. In December, 14, a son was born and was named George Preston. In 1865 by permission by Edwin Jay and others got a letter from the Methodist church and cast my lot with the West Union church, I was a pretty good singer and led the singing for 10 years. The Deacons were Robert Stewart Ben Langston and Simon Snyder. In 1866, my grandfather Kessler died the 22 of Sept. Buried at Troy, Ohio, Rose Hill Cemetery. Continued my occupation of farming and in 1868, Jan. 30 another son was born unto us, named Henry, after my father. March, 1869, my sisters husband died, James R. Miller. Also my grandfather Goings, Michael. In 1870, Oct. 21, another daughter was born named Lula May, died Dec. 21, 1870. At this time the temperance began to be agitated by the pastor, Rev. Jay. The Murphy pledge was to be total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors. The Badge was a blue ribbon worn and I have it yet. I had been an abstainer all of my life. Not all the members signed the pledge, perhaps 2 or 3 on. Deacon kept it by the jug. Very few ministers from the pulpit preached the temperance question, in fact I did not know of any other ministers that did.

In 1872, another son was born unto us named Chares L., born Dec. 9. Still farming and the Sabbath taking the small children to Sabbath In 1876, our oldest son took the tuberculosis and died Nov. 4, 1877. Owen E. A hard stroke, he being 18 years old. Jan. 12, 1878, my father died, was at his bed side for three weeks previous to

his death. In March a daughter died by the name of Emma, born 1876, Sept.. That winter through 1876, me and my wife visited my Uncle Charles Goings in Dannville, Ill. Also have boarded a teacher that taught our school by the name of Cornilius Pressler.

After my fathers death, 1879, at my Fathers request of me on his death bed, he told there ought to be a ~~scholl~~ church house at the cemetery and it was his request tha6 I should urge the matter of building same and the matter was presented to Elder Jay. He told me that the neighborhood needed a church house. He recommended that I should start a Subscription on 2500 dollars. Reported same to the Church, where by there was a building committee chosen, consisting of myself, Aaron Fouts, Wm. Smith, and Ahijah Shearer. I was chosen clerk and treasurer and in the fall, Oct., we had a nice brick edifice. The dedication sermon was preached by Rev. Thomas B. Dewhiney of Dayton, Ohio, after which there was a meeting on Saturday to choose the church officers. By election, Abijah Shearer, Wm. Smith, B. N. Longston were elected Deacons and myself church clerk, Ahijah Shearer, treasurer. I got Elder Jay to write the government, ~~th~~ there ~~was~~ 30 members to the covenant and up to this time, they all passed away excepting myself, Harriet Wheelock and Davis Wheelock of West Milton, J. B. Smith was our first pastor and then O. P. Garner and O. P. Furnas. In the meantime Rev., Watson of Troy, now and then. I was Superintendent of the Sunday School from 1884 to 1886, also Superintendent at the Curtis Church one mile north of Fredrick at the same time, 2 o'clock P.M. for the same time. The church membership had increased to 200 members up to 1890. In 1893, I sold my farm because my children had all married, excepting Ira, he being 12 years old. I bought a farm in Staunton Township. There was a host of brothers and sisters called upon us to bid us Farewell and the Mite Society of which my wife was a member bidding us Godspeed. On the 2nd day of March, 1893, we moved to our new home.

I decided to go into the small print business and I was very successful in my undertaking, after two years we builded a nice frame house. Wes did not get back to the old West Milton very often, being 10 miles away from the church. So me and my wife attended the Methodist at Raper Chapel, two and a half miles west of us. Here I became acquainted with Rev. Ferfueson, a good Christian man in 1896.

The first Kessler Reunion was held at Joe Kessler in his woodland Grove along the Stillwater River in 1879. In 1882, was held at Kessler in George Cress Grove and in 1887 was held at the West Union Church and it is still continues to be held at that place and Joe Kessler has been president nearly all the time. The regular time of meeting is the first Thursday in August. In 1862, my brother-in-law Joshua Pearson purchased a farm in Indiana, near Kokomo and in 1863 I and brother David went to visit them, went by Rail at Holly days and on New Years day morning it was 32 degrees below zero before it was snow was six inches deep. The day before it was nice and mild weather. My father had 240 acres of land in Dark County, 4 miles south of Gellysburg (Gettysburg?). He decided me 60 acres and brother David 60 acres and Mary Ann Miller 58 acres and Susan Pearson 58 acres. In 1863 in the fall or in August, having sold my land in Dark County I purchased 80 acres in Indiana near Kokomo. Purchased

the same from Judge Samuel Davis of Troy, Ohio. I had the land about 6 months and then sold it getting a thousand dollars more than I gave for it. It was woodland 4 or 5 acres partly cleared, very good land, mostly black soil. I had previously sold my land in Dark County for a thousand dollars. My brother David sold his for eight hundred, so did the Sisters.

Then in 1865, I purchased 80 acres of land of G. A. Pierce lying one mile west of Kessler Station along the River and on the Kessler Pike of which the station was named. There were two other brothers owning land along the Pike, David and Martin.

I will go back to our younger days after we were married and commenced farming. I always put out 21 acres of wheat in the fall and I always but the 20 acres myself witht the cradle. I would cut in the morning wheat. I and Harriett would take care of until 11 o'clock then she would go to the house and set dinner. She raked and I bound after dinner. I would cut again for two hours, for two hours then she would come out to rake again until suppertime. After supper she done her housework then we would shock it up at night, hauled in to the barn ourselves. We done no hiring those days. Harriett loaded, and I pitched on the wagon and she pitched it off to mein snow until the boys and girls were big enough to help.

I have a saw blade that my father owned when I was at home and I used it when I was 19 years old, sawed walnut lumber for his house that was finished in 1857. The lumber was seasoned one year. Abraham Hoover built the house by the assistance of his brother ~~after~~ Walter Hoover. The house was completed all by hand, doors, windows. I waited on the mason that built the foundation of stone bolders. His name was Cook from Union. I also have his hand sickle that belonged to my grandfather John B. Kessler. I have seen him use it in 1852 when I carried water for four reapers. They would reap through the field and then hook the sickle on their shoulders and lined back where I had brought them water and a little tanzy bitter but I never saw any of them intozicated.

Henry's picture was taken in 1875

Serene's picture was taken in 1870

John B's picture was taken in 1853

Harriett's father was a very stout man. It is known that he could pick up a barrel of whiskey and sit it in the hind end of a wagon when he was in his thirtys.

He owned the mill what is called the Byrnett Mill near the Big Four crossed Stillwater. He owned it about 10 years. There were 15 acres of land that belonged to it and he also farmed it raising good cfops.

In 1860 living on the rine in the fall me and Eli Duncan built a house where he now resided on the road that runs from the Byrnett Bridge to the Dayton and Covington Pike. It is still standing. We had pleasant time together. He is a little older than myself.

The History of the Kesslers, their ancestors came from Switzerland in 1740, Part of them settled in Pennsylvania; some came into Ohio in 1780 and some of them settled near Union, Montgomery County, Ohio. My grandfather, John B. Kessler, and his brother settled in Miami Co. Grandfather settled in Monroe ~~County~~ Township near Nashville in 1802 where he purchased a great deal of Government land. Samuel settled in Illinois, Bond County.

Staunton Township, Miami County, Ohio...moved to said Township the 2nd day of March, 1893 on 30 acres of land purchased by me from the Michael Noland Heirs, 20 acres. The 10 acres bought Andrew Emel, log house upon the 10 acres no other buildings and 2 cherry trees. The 20 acres had been in timber and cut off it, therefore was to be cleared and patches of thickets and some place the neighbors told me the water stood upon the ground years around. I decided to go into the small fruit business on the 10 acres and it took me 2 years to get started. Ira was 14 years of age assisted some but went to school in winter time for 2 years and then graduated under the Boswell and then went to town to work in the factories. My other children, the boys, had left home, all of them from 18 to 19 years of age.

I and my wife went to work with a will determined to win. She kept 3 milk cows and raised chickens galor and attended market. Kept the table supplied and had money to spare for clothing. In 1897, I had money enough to build us a house, dug the cellar, had a mason to lay the wall. Gave the contract to Samuel Yonce of Kessler, Ohio. House completed cost \$1200 dollars, which I had in the bank in my name. I then got the 20 acres ready for the plow. Tilled it also a spear that was an open ditch which I payed one hundred and 10 dollars. Payed all together for tilling 300 hundred dollar, had the 30 acres enclosed with anerun were fence. Fenced 4 fields with same cost \$300 and then I built a barn cost 500 dollars had the house and barn rodded cost 100 dollars.

I had 60 apple trees bearing 80 cherry trees bearing, 20 bearing pear trees, 50 bearing plum trees and all kinds of grapes in abundance. All varieties of small fruit. These were our happiest days.

Cost of house	\$1200
Tile	\$300
Financing	\$300
Barn	\$500
Rodding	\$100
Phaeton	\$280
Bought horse	\$100

\$2780