

Melzar Nye Memoir

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Creator: Nye, Melzar

Title: Melzar Nye Memoir

Dates: 1790-1872

Bulk Dates: 1790-1800

Quantity: 1 mss box

Abstract: In this 24-page memoir, written about 1872, Melzar Nye recounts his family's trip from Connecticut to Marietta in 1790, and describes their experiences on the early Ohio frontier.

Identification:

Language: English

Biography/History

Melzar Nye was born March 11, 1785, in Warren Township, Litchfield County, Connecticut. The son of Ebenzer Nye (1750-1823) and Desire Sawyer (1757-1800), Melzar had five brothers and one sister: Lewis (m. Margaret Stewart), Nial (m1. Rhoda Smith; m2. Matilda Cooley), George (m. Lydia Gardner), Nathan, Theodorus (m. Rebecca Varnum), and Sarah (m. Azariah Pratt).

In 1790 the Nye family loaded goods onto wagons that were drawn by oxen and set out for the new settlement at Marietta in what would later become the state of Ohio. At the headwaters of the Ohio River, they built a boat and, along with the Shipman family, continued their journey by water, arriving in Marietta just before the outbreak of the Indian wars of 1791 to 1795. During hostilities with the Indians, the Nyes lived in the Campus Martius stockade, occupying the upper room in the northeast block house.

When peace was made with the Indians in 1795, Ebenezer Nye moved his family up the Muskingum River to start a farm on his donation lot in the Rainbow neighborhood (later the property of Thomas Ridgeway). Melzar's mother died in 1800, and in 1802, his father married Silence (Grant) Gardner, formerly the wife of Benoni Gardner.

After several years of helping his father with the farm, Melzar returned to Marietta, where he learned the silversmith's trade from his brother-in-law, Ezra Pratt. He soon had the opportunity to work with a surveying party, and for awhile he lived in the vicinity of Zanesville, Muskingum County, Ohio, while pursuing various types of work.

Melzar Nye was married to Phebe Sprague in 1810, and the couple eventually returned to Rainbow to be near his father, who died in 1823. In November of 1826, Melzar moved his family and household goods by flatboat to Meigs County, Ohio, where he had purchased land from the heirs of Hamilton Kerr. There he remained until his death on November 7, 1873.

Scope and Content

Written about 1872 when Melzar Nye was 87 years old, this 24-page memoir recounts the Nye family's trip from Connecticut to Marietta, Ohio, in 1790, and tells of their experiences on the early Ohio frontier. Although Nye was a child of only five when the journey was made, he recalls incidents that made an impression on him, and includes details that may have been supplied by his father or older siblings in later

years. Nye mentions events in the early history of Ohio, such as the Big Bottom massacre and Harmar's defeat, and describes the effect they had on settlers. Daily life and the struggles for survival in the frontier settlement of Marietta are related. Of special interest are descriptions of the settlers' encounters with Indians and the postponement of his sister's wedding when their corn house burned. The language and spelling used by Nye in his memoir are representative of the style of pronunciation and grammar common to his era and location. A typescript and digitized images of this document are available.

Statement of Arrangement

A folder containing the 24-page memoir and a folder with supplemental information about the Nye family are held in a single manuscript box.

Indexing Terms

Frontier and pioneer life – Ohio
Indians of North America – Wars – 1750-1815
Marietta (Ohio) – History
Nye, Desire Sawyer, 1757-1800
Nye, Ebenezer, 1750-1823
Nye, George, 1782-1825
Nye, Lewis, 1779-1814
Nye, Melzar, 1785-1873
Nye, Nathan, 1790-1856
Nye, Nial, 1787-1841
Nye, Theodorus, 1793-1832
Ohio – History – 1787-1865
Pratt, Sarah Nye, 1777-1857
Washington County (Ohio) – History
United States – Description and travel

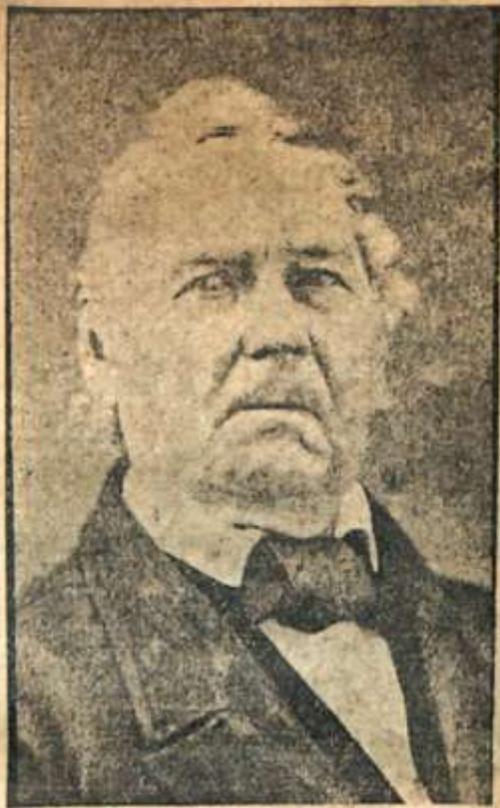
Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Melzar Nye Memoir, Marietta College Library

Detailed Description of the Collection

24-page, loose-leaf, manuscript memoir.



MELZAR NYE,

Born in Litchfield, Conn., March 11, 1785. Emigrated with his father, Ebenezer Nye to Marietta, Ohio, in 1790. Died in Meigs county, Ohio, Nov. 7, 1873; of sixth generation from Benjamin, of Sandwich, Mass.