

MOSES SAILOR - Mary Miller

Moses Sailor, the second son of Jacob and Esther Crow Sailor, was born October 2, 1808, in Monroe County, Ohio. When he was twenty-four (on April 6, 1832) he married Mary Miller, a daughter of Jacob Miller and Rebecca Martin. Jacob Miller was born in 1785 and died in 1875. Rebecca was born in 1792 and died in September 1853 in Monroe Co., Ohio. The 1860 census of Monroe County, Ohio shows Jacob Miller living with his son Thomas and wife Comfort Waller. He was listed as seventy-five. He lived to be ninety years old. Mary Miller was born May 18, 1814 in Monroe County, Ohio.

The following story of the Life of the First Settler of Faribault County, Minnesota: is told by Moses Sailor to the author of the History of Minnesota in whose book it appears with a full page picture of Moses:

Moses Sailor was the first permanent settler of Faribault County. He was born in the year 1808 and was married at the age of twenty-four years. He had always been a farmer by occupation. Immediately after marrying, he emigrated to Elkhart County, Indiana which was then quite a new and sparsely settled country. Here he continued to reside for twenty-two years. His wife died in 1849, leaving him with nine children. In the fall of the year 1854, he emigrated with his family to Chickasaw County, Iowa, where he took up quarters for the winter in the village of Bradford.

Finding that the country there had already been mainly taken up and as he says, "not being new enough to suit my pioneer tastes" and desiring to get lands for his boys as well as a home for himself, he concluded to prospect further as soon as the weather would permit in the Spring. Having heard very favorable accounts of the territory of Minnesota, he, near the first of April 1855, in company with James Little and John Love, carrying their guns, provisions and blankets, started on foot from Bradford on an exploring expedition into Minnesota. After a day's journey, neither roads nor settlements existed, but striking out boldly into the wilderness, they directed their course, by the aid of a pocket compass and a map, for the waters of the Blue Earth River. That stream was somewhat definitely laid down on the maps at that time. Blue Earth River was on the East Branch about two miles East of where Blue Earth City now stands. Here they stopped and built a fire on April 8, at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. Leaving Mr. Little here, Mr. Sailor and Mr. Love proceeded across the prairie for the west branch of the river to examine the timber and lay of the country. They reached the west branch section twenty in township 102, range 27, as indicated by the section stakes and quite near where Mr. Sailor subsequently took his "claim".

After prospecting for a few hours, and being much pleased with the country, they returned to Mr. Little and then all proceeded to the junction of the two branches of the river, afterwards known as the "forks," near which they were so fortunate as to find a small, rough log cabin on the north bank of the stream. It was very rudely built, quite low and not more than ten by twelve feet in size, and had evidently been

built as a temporary shelter. This cabin had been built by one, Thomas Holmes , of Shakopee, a famous explorer and town-site locator, in the early days of the territory of Minnesota. He was in this region in 1854 and erected this cabin with the intention of making a claim of the land adjoining with a view of eventually laying out a town in the vicinity. This he never did, however, but went so far as to employ two men, whose names are forgotten, to go up on the land and who occupied this cabin for a short time. Mr. Holmes did not bring provisions, as agreed, so they returned to Shakopee and the project of laying out a town was given up by Holmes . This cabin was the first advance made in the building of a human habitation on the capacity and architectural style of an Indian tepee. It was the first house erected in the County. To return to our company, it being now near night, they concluded to camp here. This country at the time presented a very favorable aspect. The snow, of which there seemed to have been very little during the winter, had all disappeared. The ground was dry and the grass just starting. The streams were very low and easily forded. A bright, warm sun, cloudless skies and balmy atmosphere welcomed our explorers to this new land.

The next morning they started northward to Mankato, exploring the timber and adjacent prairies and camped in the evening near Jackson's Lake in Blue Earth County. The next day they reached Mankato, which they found to be a small village of some fifteen houses, large and small, and a frontier hotel, where they stopped. The town had been laid out some three years before. Here they learned that it had been currently reported that the Winnebago Indians, who were soon to be removed from their location in the more northern part of the territory, were to be located upon a "reservation" on the headwaters of the Blue Earth River in Faribault. Should this occur, our pioneers would, of course, have to abandon any idea of settling in this county. They then proceeded to prospect the country for a few days on the Blue Earth, Maple and Cobb Rivers in Blue Earth County, with which they were highly pleased. At this time, there were but a few scattered settlers in Blue Earth County and but one small village - Mankato. At an election held in that county in the fall of that year, only eighty-six votes were polled. There were but a few settlers in Freeborn County and all of this county, and all the territory west and northwest was vacant.

Being entirely satisfied with the country, our company returned by their former route through this country to Bradford and determined to move into Blue Earth County immediately in the vicinity of Mankato. In pursuance of this conclusion, Mr. Sailor, on or about the 8th day of May, started from Bradford with his family of children consisting of five sons (Jacob , Abel , Daniel , William and Emanuel) and three daughters (Esther , Amanda and Roxina), all of whom remained in Faribault County as residents. He was accompanied by Solomon Myers and Archibald Morris and family. They traveled in covered wagons heavily loaded with household goods and provisions, each wagon drawn by two yokes of oxen, the great motive power of new countries. They had decided to settle somewhere on the Maple River in Blue Earth County and the route they traveled lay by Clear Lake in Iowa, Walnut Lake and Minnesota Lake in this county. This country, as before intimated, was then a

trackless wilderness, no roads, no bridges, no human habitations and the "trail" made by Mr. Sailor and his company was the first wagon track made in the county by any settler. They stopped on the Maple River, about ten miles from Mankato, where Mr. Sailor left the company in camp and proceeded to Mankato. Here he found that the Indians had selected their reservation in Blue Earth County. He then concluded to return and settle on the headwater of the Blue Earth in Faribault County, but Mr. Morris decided not to accompany him and remained in Blue Earth County a short time. Mr. Sailor accompanied by Mr. Myers traveled on his return by the route he had taken when prospecting, there being no track or road. However, on the 25th day of May, near noon, he had stopped on the west half of the southwest quarter of section twenty, which, with the south half of the southeast quarter of section nineteen adjoining, all in the township one-hundred and two of range twenty-seven, he determined to claim.

On locating, Mr. Sailor proceeded to break up about five acres of land which he planted to corn and potatoes, camping meantime in his wagon and a large tent, which he had brought with him. This sod produced plenty of roasting ears and fodder sufficient for one horse and a dozen hogs during the succeeding winter. The potatoes yielded abundantly and were of a superior quality. After getting in his crop, he proceeded to erect a house. This building was 18 by 24 feet and one story high and was completed in about a week, except the roof, which was partly covered by the tent cloth. And this was the second house in Faribault County.

Provisions now getting scarce, Mr. Sailor went about one-hundred and twenty miles into Iowa for a supply. He was gone some twelve days and on his return, he finished up the house, putting on a "shake" roof. This old log house has long since disappeared, but it was once the headquarters of the County, the only hotel, or stopping place in a vast region for some time, the first resort of new comers, the scene of many a hospitable entertainment and of many a frontier dance and social gathering in the early days. The boys set to work breaking up ten acres of land in the early summer and a small additional tract was broken in October, which Sailor says did not prove valuable as the sod instead of rotting dried in tough strips and pieces like old sheep skin and lay about for three or four years. He says he knows more about "breaking" now than he did then.

During the year, many Indians, sometimes as many as two or three hundred in a company, would call on Mr. Sailor, usually wanting tobacco, sugar, pork and sometimes firewater, which the latter article he never let them have. In fact, the country was full of small bands of roving Indians who were engaged in hunting and fishing and sometimes they were on the war-path, but he says they were always peaceable and well disposed toward him.

In those days he says game and fur-bearing animals were very plentiful, especially wolves, fox, mink, otter and elk, though but few deer. There were squirrels, rabbits, gophers, prairie chickens, geese, ducks, cranes, some few black bear, panthers, wild cats, wood chucks, muskrats and skunks. The streams and lakes were stocked with

fish. He further states that on his arrival he found no Buffalo, but observed a stumping or herding ground near the state line where a large number of buffalo had stopped the proceeding winter. During the year, the health of himself and family was very good, and the weather, until winter set in, unusually pleasant.

He has continued to reside on the land he first took up. His farm has been largely improved and he has long since erected a comfortable frame house and large barn. Mr. Sailor is of medium stature, well-built and has black hair and a long black beard, now well sprinkled with gray; dark eyes and dark complexion and in his prime was a man of great muscular power and endurance, hardworking and courageous. He belongs to that race of hardy adventurous pioneers, known only in the far west, who have courage to abandon the advantages of old settled countries and go upon the extreme frontier or plunge into the wilderness and amid want and hardships and privations, surrounded by many dangers, open up the ways of settlement and civilization.

He remarried some years ago, 1869, and is passing his declining years in ease and comfort, owing no man anything, strictly honest in his dealings, hospitable and a Jackson Democrat. In the early days of the country he served the public well and faithfully for some years as county commissioner. But he now takes no interest in politics and public affairs, except to vote. He says he has no ambitions to satisfy and hates turmoil and strife. May the evening of his days be cloudless and his sun of life set in tranquility and peace, preluding a still brighter day that may break for him on the other shore.

The foregoing article states the Moses Sailor took eight children with him to Minnesota. He and Mary were the parents of ten children. Rebecca, the eldest child was married at the time and raising a family. She and family moved a short time later to Blue Earth City. A daughter Margaret died at eight months. She was born May 16, 1839 and died in January 1840. Mary Sailor, the mother, was preparing to take a trip back to Ohio to visit her people when she suddenly became ill and passed away June 13, 1849 in Elkhart, Indiana. We can but imagine the feelings of these eight motherless children as they began to build a new home in the wilderness. There were many privations and hours of hard work, but this life was not all made up of unpleasant things. The father played the violin and as settlers began to move in dances were held in the cabin. Many times, bands of Indians gathered outside the cabin and listened to the music, always friendly to the Sailors. All visitors were welcomed "guests" of the Sailors for one day or several; the latch-string was always out.

On February 5, 1869, Moses Sailor married Mrs. Nancy Falknor, the widow of John Falknor. She was born in 1816 and died May 26, 1897 in Blue Earth City, Minnesota. Her maiden name was Morris and she was a native of Monroe County, Ohio.

From another Minnesota history the following:

Moses spent his youth assisting to clear a heavily timbered farm in Ohio and resided with his parents until 1832, when he sought a more western home and took up his abode in Elkhart County, Indiana, settling in the woods and again beginning the task of clearing a farm. In this undertaking he succeeded and he continued to reside there until 1854. That year he once more turned his face to the setting sun. He arrived at Nashua, Iowa where he left his family while he started out on foot to find a desirable location, and, after walking more than a hundred miles, he finally decided upon Faribault County. He here filed his claim, then went back to Iowa for his family, and in April 1855, they made permanent settlement in this county. February 5, 1869, Mr. Sailor married Mrs. Nancy Falknor, widow of John, by whom she had three children. Mary, the only one living, was the wife of Philip Miller. When Mr. Sailor came to Faribault County, its only inhabitants were Indians and wild animals and for some time his nearest market was Cedar Falls, Iowa, the trips to that place being made with ox teams and the time required to go and come being from six to ten days. Now, at the age of 87 years, Mr. Sailor retains to a remarkable degree, the mental and physical vigor of his youth. He has by his honorable and upright dealings with his fellow men won their confidence and esteem and few men in the county have a wider circle of friends, both among the young and the old, than this venerable pioneer. He has seen the country grow up from a wilderness to one of the most thickly populated and prosperous counties in the state. He has always been a staunch Democrat, and for eight years served as county commissioner. At this writing, his descendants number more than one hundred.

The following is listing on he grave record.

Moses Sailor was the first permanent settler in Faribault County, Minnesota, arriving in 1855. The grave marker is a special replica of a log cabin. The dates are hard to read, but may say: born - Oct 2, 1808, died - Feb 14, 1896.

Moses married Mary Miller, daughter of Jacob Miller and Betty Martin in 1832. They had 10 children. Mary died in 1849 in Elkhart County, Indiana.

Moses Sailor was living in Olive Township, Elkhart County, Indiana in 1850. The 1850 census says he was born in Ohio. No wife is listed with him. But, he has several children, all born in Indiana: Rebecca born circa 1833, Abel born circa 1835, Jacob born circa 1837, Esther, born circa 1838, Amanda born circa 1842, Roxena born circa 1843, Daniel born circa 1845, William born circa 1846, Emanuel born circa 1848.

In April of 1855, Moses Sailor settled in Faribault County, Minnesota.

In the 1860 census he is in Blue Earth, Faribault County, Minnesota. Once again, no wife is listed with him. He has these children with him: Amanda age 18, Roxena age 16, Daniel age 15, William age 13, and Amanuel age 11.

On 5 February 1869 he married Mrs. Nancy Faulkner (maiden name Morris).

Spouses:

Mary J. Miller Sailor*

Nancy Morris Falknor Sailor (1816 - 1897)*

Children:

Rebecca Sailor Falknor (1833 - 1912)*

Abel Sailor (1835 - 1910)*

Esther Sailor Johnson (1837 - 1926)*

Amanda Sailor (1841 - 1923)*

Roxena Sailor Billings (1843 - 1874)*

Daniel Sailor (1845 - 1916)*

William F Sailor (1846 - 1922)*

Emanuel Sailor (1849 - 1929)*

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