

Moses Sailor Obituary

The following obituary of Moses Sailor was copied from a Blue Earth City newspaper "The Faribault County Register":

"At his home one mile south of Blue Earth City, Minnesota, Friday morning February 14, 1896, Moses Sailor, age eighty-seven years, four months and twelve days, died. Thus has passed away at a ripe old age the first settler of Faribault County. In April 1855 he visited this section and on the 25th of May of the same year arrived here with his family and took up the first claim in the county, the one on which he has just died. He was the first white settler in what was shortly afterwards to be Faribault County. Its only inhabitants when he arrived were Indians.

"The deceased was born in Monroe County, Ohio October 2, 1808 and was married in 1832 to Miss Mary Miller , who bore him ten children, nine of whom lived to be grown, and eight survive him. They are Rebecca , wife of Jess Falknor , of Blue Earth County; Abel ; Jacob M. ; Esther , wife of Alexander Johnson of Colorado; Amanda , wife of Samuel Sailor (cousin); Daniel ; William of Colorado; Roxina , deceased wife of Levi Billings , and Emanuel . The mother, Mary , of these children died in Elkhart County, Indiana in 1849. On February 5, 1869 he married Mrs. Nancy Falknor, whose only living child by her first husband is Mrs. Philip Miller (Mary) of this township.

"Mr. Sailor was a man of great physical power and possessed good judgment. For a number of years he served as a member of the board of County commissioners in the early days of the county, and his practical good sense helped materially in shaping affairs in our then new country.

"The latter generation can hardly realize that the man who has just been laid to rest has quietly lived on his farm and witnessed the transformation of this then wild territory into one of the grandest and wealthiest states in the Union. He found our county uninhabited and lived to see it populated with over twenty-one thousand contented people, its broad prairie lands covered with groves and divided into the finest farms to be found anywhere; he has lived to see his children and his children's children grow up and settle about him until his descendants now number over one hundred. The funeral was held at the Episcopal Church on Saturday afternoon and was largely attended by our older settlers in particular and our citizens generally."

A plaque has been placed on the spot where the first cabin was built. On the court house grounds in Blue Earth City a memorial has been erected to the memory of Moses Sailor . It says:

"To honor and commemorate the first white settler of Faribault County - Moses Sailor settled here May 25, 1855. Lived here until his death 1896. Erected by the George W. Holland Chapter, Daughter of American Revolution."

By his grave in the cemetery is a miniature cabin carved of stone, with the latch string hanging out. Two interesting stories are remembered by his descendants. Some Indians offered to trade a quarter of land which they owned to Moses for a team of ponies. He traded with them. The other story is that a couple of men called at his home one day and introduced themselves as missionaries, saying they would like to leave some tracts. He replied "That will be just fine, but be sure they (the "tracks") point away from the door."

The small village which was begun in Faribault County by the Moses Sailor family was named Blue Earth from the river by the same name. The township was named Blue Earth City by special commission in 1858, in compliance with the request of the citizens of the village. Thus the name of the township is derived from the village, and the name of the village is derived from the river and the name of the river is from the Indians or possibly from a German romance.

Minnesota is a compound word composed of the Indian words Minne - meaning water - and so-tah - meaning sky-tinted or the land of sky-tinted waters, because its numerous lakes and streams reflect in their crystal depths, the clouds and blue of the overarching skies. The whole surface of Minnesota is dotted over with lakes nearly ten thousand in number and ranging in size from fifty rods to thirty miles in diameter, and on its eastern border lies the largest lake of the world - Lake Superior.

Immediately after their marriage on April 6, 1832, Moses Sailor and Mary Miller Sailor immigrated to Elkhart County, Indiana from their home in Monroe County, Ohio. They settled a short distance from Goshen, the County seat of Elkhart, in a township later named Olive, where they took up land and began farming.