



1805: Rev Armstrong and his Congregation



As the (pioneer) families relocated move to undeveloped areas, it was often with the absence of preachers. This meant the settlers relied on itinerant (traveling) preachers, which might be weeks or months between visits (to perform baptisms, marriages, etc.) , Such was the situation in Greene County, Ohio prior to 1806 when Rev Armstrong and his congregation relocated to Greene County Ohio.

When the Northwest Territory became part of the United States, Ohio was the first to declare statehood (in 1803). **James Galloway**, of our Galloway History, was one of the first settlers in Ohio, settling in 1797.

By 1802/1803 a dedicated minister was desired. Three different volumes on the History of Greene County Ohio (by **Broadstone, Dills and Robinson**) share biographies on the early pioneers settling in Greene County. These Histories share the story of Rev. Armstrong, and those who followed him to Ohio.



In 1802 **James Galloway** (and his son, James Jr) of our Galloway Tree Branches (*living in Greene County, Ohio*) went to Kentucky on business, stopping to see his brother Samuel (*then living at McConnell's Run in Kentucky*). While there (*the Galloways*) heard Mr. Armstrong preaching. Being very impressed and feeling Mr. Armstrong would meet the needs of the Covenanter and Succeeder Presbyterians in Ohio, James approached Mr. Armstrong, urgently inviting him to consider moving to Ohio as their minister.

Mr. Armstrong agreed on the condition (this) was the desire of his people in Kentucky. This was during the time frame of discontent regarding the slavery system, with the Covenanter and Succeeder Presbyterian ministers speaking against slavery in the pulpit. 'Ohio being the first-born of the ordinance of 1787 was a free state', meaning his congregation was in favor of the relocation.

The Galloways returned to Ohio, sharing their conversation with Mr. Armstrong, the (Ohio) community unanimously agreeing they would like Mr. Armstrong to be their minister. James Jr returned to Kentucky to bring Armstrong to Ohio... and (he) immediately began preaching in the house of James Sr. Col Morrow (and others of Mr. Armstrong's congregation in Kentucky) 'came to this county to locate land'.

By 1805 Mr. Armstrong (later referred to as Rev. Armstrong) and the majority of his congregation had relocated to Ohio'. These families entwined with our Tree Branches, becoming part of the Underground Railroad system.

'Subsequently a church was built on a lot of three acres donated by Mr. James Stevenson for church and cemetery purposes...This edifice was on the north bank of Massie's Creek, about four miles from where it empties into the Little Miami River. Men and women would walk or ride horseback from two to fifteen miles, sitting without fire in the coldest of weather, to hear two sermons.

These good old Succeeders continued to worship until 1812/1813, when they built a larger...more comfortable house...a short distance from the first... The labor divided among the members of the congregation. Mr. Armstrong was to furnish a gallon of whiskey, **Squire George Galloway** was to haul the logs, which had to done by oxen'.



Source of Rev Armstrong and his Congregation

Three different volumes were written on the History of Greene County Ohio (by **Broadstone, Dills and Robinson**). All three share information on Rev. Armstrong. I have chosen to share excerpts from the Dills version. If you wish to read more about this subject, click on the link:

https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_Greene_County/gS4uAAAAAYAAJ?hl=en.

- R. S. Dills published in 1881,
- George F. Robinson published in 1902
- M. A. Broadstone published in 1918.

Subsequently, "a church was built on a lot of three acres donated by Mr. James Stevenson for church and cemetery purposes. The building was thirty feet square, and built of peeled hickory logs, and had neither loft, nor floor, save mother earth. In it were neither stoves nor chimneys. There was but one door, and it was in the center of one end of the house. From the door there was an aisle that run to the foundation of the pulpit, in the center of the other end of the house. The pulpit was constructed of clapboards, on a wooden foundation, and on each side was a window of twelve 8x10 lights. It was seated with two rows of puncheons from twelve to fifteen inches broad and twelve feet long, split out from poplar near by, and from four to six inches thick, hewed on the upper side and dressed with a jack-plane. In each end and center there were uprights some three feet long, mortised in, and on these uprights two or three slats were pinned, which formed quite a comfortable back. These seats had four substantial legs, like a stool, one end standing against the wall, the other extending to the aisle. This edifice was on the north bank of Massie's Creek, about four miles from where it empties into the Little Miami River. Men and women would walk or ride on horseback from two to twelve miles, and sometimes fifteen miles, to this house, and sit without fire in the coldest weather and hear two sermons."

The above quotation is substantially as we find it in a communication referred to before, and published by Andrew Galloway, Esq., in the Xenia News, in the year 1859. Thus these good old seceders continued to worship till about the year 1812 or 1813, when they built a larger, nobler, and more comfortable house of hewed logs, a short distance from the first. In the building of this house, the labor was divided up among the members of the congregation. Mr. Armstrong was to furnish a gallon of whisky, and Squire George Galloway was to haul the logs, which had to be done with oxen. For some reason the squire couldn't manage the oxen very well, and employed a wicked gentile to take his place, who attributed the squire's want of success to the fact that he didn't swear. However this may have been in regard to the driving of oxen, profane swearing being a violation of law—human and divine—the squire, from a double sense of duty, faithfully inflicted