

Naperville Heritage Society Library/Archives Collections

Guide to Collection

Hobson

Name of the Collection

12

Collection Number

1830--1952

Date Range

3"/1

Linear Feet/Boxes

8/10

Number of Folders/Items

4/5/2011

Processed by/Date

Description

The Hobson family, led by Bailey and Clarissa Hobson, is known foremost as being the first white settlers in DuPage County in 1830. The family, originally from England, fled to Ireland to avoid being persecuted as Quakers. Bailey's grandfather, William Hobson, was born in 1739 in Frederick County, Virginia. Bailey, the son of John Hobson and Lydia Harvey, was born April 30, 1798 in Lost Creek Monthly Meeting, Tennessee. Bailey Hobson married Clarissa Stewart March 8, 1821 in Indiana and sought a prairie claim in Illinois in 1830. Eventually settling on acreage on both sides of the DuPage River, Bailey Hobson established the first grist mill in northern Illinois in 1834. He served in the Black Hawk War of 1832. The Hobson Tavern served customers waiting for their grain to be ground. Surviving many hardships of the pioneer life, the Hobsons raised twelve children and built an imposing two story colonial frame home in 1835. The children married into other prominent Naperville families such as Royce, Frazier, Page, Kentner, Cody, Haight and Crosman. Bailey Hobson died March 25, 1850 leaving Clarissa to take care of the mill, the farm, and the younger children. Clarissa, a Georgia native, was born December 13, 1804 and died May 27, 1884.

The collection shows the literary flair of Nancy Jane Hobson, Bailey and Clarissa's daughter, with her fictional account of the family's trip to Illinois in 1830, and grandson Hally Haight's poetry. The sad plight of Bailey and Clarissa's youngest child, Adele, an unmarried companion to her long widowed mother, is revealed in the Conservator's Bond of 1912 declaring her insane. The scrapbook of R. Louise Haight contains family fabrics and mill cloth from the 1830s, and photos and newspaper clippings of the Hobson, Haight and Royce families through 1935. The establishment of Pioneer Park with the Hobson millstones shows the importance of this early economic activity in DuPage County on the site of the original homestead. Dedication programs for the park from 1929 and 1952 offer much information about the Hobson family history. The DuPage Historical Review from 1950 offers pictures of the Hobsons, their tavern, and millstones. The Hobsons represent the restless pioneers who endured harsh travel conditions, an Indian war, building a home and business by hand, and leaving a legacy of many descendants

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that are remembered today in Pioneer Park, Hobson School, roads, subdivisions and many other place names.

Inventory

- *Colored print of the John H. Hobson residence, from the 1874 Combination Atlas of DuPage County
- *Story written by Nancy (Nancie) Jane Hobson, April 29, 1830--September 29, 1906, describing fictionally the Hobson family's trip out west from 1830-1832, for the Lothrop Literary Prize, 1880s
- *Poem written by Hally Haight, son of Elvira and John Haight, grandson of Clarissa and Bailey Hobson, January 23, 1892, addressed to "Freddie Dear"
- *Conservator's bond for Adela Hobson, declared insane, with Benjamin J. Slick appointed Conservator of her estate, 1912. Adela was the youngest child of Bailey and Clarissa Hobson, born June 26, 1846, died December 1912.
- *Program for the Opening of Pioneer Park of DuPage County and Dedication of Monument, Thursday, July 4, 1929. Pioneer Park is part of the original tract granted to Bailey Hobson, the first white settler in DuPage County, with millstones from the 1835 Hobson Mill.
- *Scrapbook for the Hobson-Haight-Royce families, compiled by R. Louise Haight, items ranging from 1830 to 1935
- *Two copies of the DuPage Historical Review, May-June 1950, with pictures of Bailey and Clarissa Hobson on the front cover and a picture of four of the Hobson children on the back cover
- *Two copies of the program for the Rededication of Hobson Pioneer Marker, Pioneer Park, DuPage County, Illinois, October 12, 1952