

FIRST SETTLERS IN OXFORD

In the summer of 1864 John Boice (Boyce) and sons, with Noah Brimhall, went to Round Valley, (later known as Oxford). Each built a log cabin covered with willows, wild hay, and dirt. (probably similar to the one shown in this picture)

John Boice built his cabin on the north side of Oxford creek, where the Finney Hotel later stood (George Baker lot).

Noah Brimhall built his cabin on the South side of Oxford Creek where the new school stood (now Cox Dairy)

They cut and stacked wild hay with scythes and home made wooden hand rakes and hauled the hay on a small flat rack with stakes on each corner with a pole to bind the hay and a rawhide rope at the rear end of the rack to fasten the pole.

With one yoke of oxen they put up the hay for winter to feed and care for the church cattle and sheep that John had charge of.

There were 4 families that settled in Stockton and wintered there, William G. Nelson, Neilse Georgensen, James Clements and Nephi Clements.

In September 1864, John , Mary Ann and the smaller children and Noah Brimhall returned to their homes in Smithfield. Leaving three men and one boy to carry on in their absence. (Martin Calvin Boice nicknamed "Cal or Cap ", John(jr.), Albert, nicknamed "Dockey " and Mary Jane's youngest brother George Barzee. John expected to return with provisions for the winter. But winter set in early and he could not get back at all. The three men and one boy knew they were snowed in and could not get help.. They realized their supply was low, so they began to ration their salt, cornmeal, sugar, molasses and etc. On 23 Feb. 1865, John Boice Jr. and George Barzee decided to go to Smithfield on snowshoes. They waded through snow all day and night until around 3:00 a.m. Nearing Franklin George Barzee sat down in the snow, dropped over and was gone. John went on for about 80 rods and found where the men from Franklin and Richmond had been breaking the road. He went back and dragged George through the snow and succeeded in reaching the newly broken road just east of Little Mountain about 1 mile from Franklin. He apparently sat down on the snow and called and called as loud as he could. Some of the people said they heard him but thought it was some kind of animal and went back to bed. John Jr. dropped over asleep on his face and froze to death with his hands under his head.

The next morning the people could see the two men lying on the snow but thought that it was two quilts they had left there the day before. When the men and the teams went out to continue opening the road, to their great surprise, there were two young men frozen to death. They loaded them into their sleighs and hauled them to their homes in Smithfield.

This indeed was a sad occasion for the early settlers, but was not uncommon for the early pioneers.

Mary Homer was the first school teacher – in the new log school house – which was an all purpose meeting house built in the north east corner of the meeting house lot in Oxford

George Nelson was the first baby born in Oxford

