

# THE EBEYS OF DUBLIN

In the earliest days of Dublin, Ohio two families had a major presence in the community: the Ludwig and Catherine Sells and George and Magdalena Ebey families. The Sells family moved to Washington Township, 12 miles northwest of Franklinton in about 1803. Franklinton is now the part of Columbus known as the Bottoms. The Ebeys moved to Franklinton in 1805 and then to Washington Township in 1806. They built their home about a half mile west of the approximately 85 acres in Washington Township which was laid out in lots in 1810 by John Sells, one of Ludwig's sons, and is now known as "Historic" Dublin. The Sells and Ebey families were the first families to inhabit the area, other than Indians. Both of these families came to the Dublin area from Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, a mostly rural area in the south-central part of the state, about 20 miles east of Altoona. They undoubtedly knew each other in Pennsylvania, probably attended the same church, and more than likely discussed with each other the idea of moving their families to Ohio. After the Sells family was settled in Washington Township, and while the Ebeys were in Franklinton looking for a place to settle, the Sells family probably suggested that the Ebeys consider moving to Washington Township. Although there was an influx of people in the following years, the 1820 federal census recorded that in 1820 only 137 people were living in all of Washington Township. Almost half of these people were members of the Sells and Ebey families (65 according to my count, including children, sons and daughters in-law, and grandchildren).

Many people now living in Dublin and Central Ohio know of the Sells family, but very few know of the Ebeys, probably because the Sellses stayed in Dublin longer than the Ebeys. However, on the west coast of the United States, particularly in the State of Washington, the Ebey name is well known because one of the family members, Isaac Ebey, played a major role in establishing the state. A 17,500 acre National Historical Reserve bears his name, and a military base constructed during WWII was also named after him.

I am writing this because I think the people of Dublin and Central Ohio would be interested in knowing about the Ebey family and their ties to Dublin as shown by their history. The following has been gleaned from historical records belonging to the Dublin Historical Society, including two boxes of materials given to the society by a descendant of George Ebey (1764-1847), Isaac's grandfather, consisting mainly of correspondence between family members concerning family history, and from information contained in the recently published book entitled *When Dublin Wasn't Dublin* by Tim Sells. As is normally the case, dates, such as dates of birth and death, and other facts were remembered and recorded differently by the various family members and so in writing this history some "picking and choosing" was required in reporting the dates on which certain important events occurred in the history of the Ebey family. Unfortunately some events don't get recorded at all.

## THE HISTORY OF THE EBEY FAMILY - DUBLIN PIONEERS:

Theodorus Eby (1663-1727) was born in Switzerland and died in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He was a Mennonite and came to America by way of Germany and Holland. He settled in America in 1717 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He had a son by the name of George Eby who was born around 1700.

Theodorus's son, George Eby (1700-1745?), came to America with his father in 1717 and lived in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He married Barbara Neff, and they also had a son they named George.

This second George Eby (1740-1779) was a gunsmith. He served as a soldier in the Revolutionary War. He enlisted in 1776 and was a private in Captain John Harrison's Company, 12<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment, commanded by Col. William Cook. In 1779 he was killed at the Battle of Stony Point while serving under the command of General Mad Anthony Wayne. During that battle he was a member of a small detail of soldiers referred to as the "Forlorn Hope" whose mission was to penetrate the British position after first killing the British sentries, thereby clearing the way for the main force. He was one of 15 soldiers of the "Forlorn Hope" detail killed during the battle. Only 5 of the "Forlorn Hope" soldiers survived. He and his wife, Rosina, had seven children, one of whom was the third George Eby.

This third George (Eby) Ebey was born in Warwick Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in 1764. He died in 1847, in Winchester Township, Scott County, Illinois. He changed the spelling of his last name from EBY to EBEY. In 1781, two years after his father was killed in the War, George, at the age of 17, enlisted. He served in John Stone's Company, Second Battalion, Lancaster County Militia. After the War he moved to Huntingdon County Pennsylvania, where in 1790 he married Magdalena (Mary) Ellenberger, (1772-1815), a Lancaster County girl. The couple lived in Huntingdon County and in later conversations with family members concerning Huntingdon County, they spoke of Standing Stone, Shaver's Creek and the Juniata River as being places familiar to them, so the family assumes that their home was near those places. George was a miller by occupation. He also owned boats and shipped flour and other goods down the Juniata and Susquehanna Rivers to Baltimore. On one of those trips two of his boats were intentionally wrecked by his pilots who had been bribed by a competitor to destroy the boats and cargoes. Losing his boats and cargoes was a great financial loss to George and forced him to sell his properties in Pennsylvania. George and Magdalena moved to Franklin County, Ohio, in 1805 and lived first at Franklinton for about a year and then, in 1806, moved to a home they built in Washington Township, about ½ mile west of what is now known as Historic Dublin. For those familiar with Dublin, the Ebey home was probably along what is now known as Post Road, somewhere between Frantz Road and Coffman Road. They brought to Dublin their seven children:

Elizabeth (Betsy) (1791-1867) who married William Sells of Dublin, Ludwig's son, in 1809;

Jacob (1793-1862);

Mary Polly (1796-1886) who married Amaziah Hutchinson, Jr. of Dublin, in 1818;

Henry (1798-1858);

Barbara (1800-1890);

Susannah (1803-1840) who married Daniel Hutchinson of Dublin, in 1822; and

John (1805-1893).

(Another child, Maria, was born in 1792, but died in 1793, before the family moved to Dublin.)

After coming to Dublin they had 3 more children:

Sarah (1808-1822);

George (1811-1889); and

Rosannah ((1813-1860)

When the Ebey family moved to Dublin, George was 42 and Magdalena was 34 and their children ranged in age from 15 years to 1 year old. They were a much younger family than the Sellses. In 1806, Ludwig was 63,

Catherine was 57, and their ten children ranged in age from 34 years to 14 years. Three of their sons were already married with families of their own.

Shortly after his move to Dublin, George built a primitive mill at his home for the use of the family in grinding wheat and corn. He later became a partner with John Sells in a mill built on the west bank of the Scioto River on the 400 acres of land owned by John Sells on which Historic Dublin was established.

In 1808 George and Magdalena Ebey, along with Ludwig and Catherine Sells, established Dublin's first church, the Methodist Episcopal Church. The congregation met at the Ebey home until Magdalena died and then met at the Sells home. In 1837 a church building was constructed by the Methodist Church, at 155 S. High Street on donated land. The church was renamed the Christie Methodist Church at the request of the donors of the land. In 1912 a tornado struck Dublin and badly damaged the Christie Methodist Church and the Dublin Presbyterian Church and for a time the two congregations held their services at the only remaining church in Dublin, the Christian Church, located at 81 West Bridge Street. The three congregations merged and organized a new church which they named the Dublin Community Church and took over the Christian Church building. The Dublin Community Church is still active and is still at the Bridge Street location.

While at Valley Forge with General Washington, George's father, the war hero killed at Stony Point, made a coffee mill out of a piece of a gun barrel. The soldiers used it to grind their coffee. The mill eventually made its way to Dublin when George and Magdalena moved there. The family cherished it and whenever the family feared an imminent attack by the Indians it was pitched in the river and then retrieved after the threat had passed.

Magdalena died in 1815, leaving George with several young children to raise. George continued to live in Dublin until 1828. Then, after 22 years in Dublin, when his children were grown, he moved to west central Illinois near the town of Winchester. All but three of his children moved to the same area at about the same time. The three daughters who had married Dublin men stayed in Dublin with their husbands.

George Ebey is mentioned several times in historical documents concerning Dublin and is listed as one of the witnesses to the execution of Shatayaronyah, the Wyandot Indian chief who was known to the settlers by the name of Leatherlips. He was executed in 1810, three miles north of Dublin, by Wyandot Indians loyal to Tecumseh because he refused to participate in Tecumseh's effort to run the settlers out of the Ohio Territory.

Jacob Neff Ebey (1793-1862), a child of George and Magdalena Ebey was Isaac Ebey's father. He was born in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania and came to Dublin with his family in 1806 at the age of 13. He served as a soldier under General William Henry Harrison during the War of 1812. In 1815, after returning home from the war, he and Sarah (Sally) Blue, Isaac's mother, were married. Sarah was born in Virginia in 1796.

The only mention of Jacob Ebey in the historical writings of Dublin concerns an incident that occurred shortly after the execution of Leatherlips by Indians who were hostile to the settlers. Understandably, the residents of Dublin feared an attack by the Indians, and eighteen year old Susan Sells, a granddaughter of Ludwig and Catherine, decided that, in view of the threat, she should learn to use a gun. Jacob Ebey, who was 19 years old at the time, decided to teach her. Susan fired off a round, and Elizabeth Sells, one of Ludwig's daughters-in-law, heard the shot and thought the Indians were attacking. She sent another of Ludwig's grandchildren to spread the word. The settlers started for Franklinton where they thought they would be better able to defend

themselves. Once Jacob realized that he and Susan had started a panic, he went around and explained what had really happened and the settlers returned to their cabins.

In 1829, at 36 years of age, Jacob moved with his wife and children to west central Illinois where his father and most of his siblings had moved. While living in Illinois, Jacob served as a Colonel in the Black Hawk War of 1832. (Twenty three year old Abraham Lincoln was one of his fellow soldiers in that war.)

He and Sarah had several children before moving to Illinois and had several more while living in Illinois for a total of 11. Isaac Ebey was one of Jacob and Sarah's children who was born while the Ebey family was still living in the community of Dublin. Isaac was 11 when he moved with his family to west central Illinois. In the late-1830s Jacob and his family moved from Illinois to Adair County, Missouri.

While living in Missouri Isaac became a lawyer and in 1848 he left Missouri and moved to the Oregon Territory. He first made his way to California where he prospected for gold for a while and then in San Francisco he purchased a brig called "Orbit" and sailed to Puget Sound.

He became a member of the Legislature of the Oregon Territory and, while a member, successfully fought for the division of the territory into two parts, one of which eventually became the State of Oregon and the other, the State of Washington. He suggested the name "Olympia" for the capitol of Washington, and the name was adopted. Isaac was a major political force in the area, and a vital player in territorial affairs. He was also commissioned a colonel in the Washington Territorial Volunteer Militia.

He was appointed Collector of Customs for the Washington Territory by President Pierce, and while he was serving in that position, a dispute arose over whether the San Juan Islands belonged to England or the United States. He fought hard for the inclusion of the islands in the Washington Territory. He planted the American flag on the islands and declared them the property of the United States. The dispute wasn't resolved until after his death, but the islands did become part of the State of Washington, at least in part, due to his efforts.

Isaac took up a claim for 640 acres of land on Whidbey Island in Puget Sound in 1850 under the Oregon Donation Law, built a house, and arranged for his wife and children to join him there. They arrived in 1851. In 1843, while still in Missouri, Isaac had married Rebecca Davis. Isaac and Rebecca had three children: Eason Benton Ebey (1844-1893); Jacob Ellison Ebey (1846-1890); and Sarah Harriett (1853-1861). Rebecca died on Whidbey Island in 1853, about 4 months after Sarah's birth. Three years later Isaac married Emily Sconce.

The land Isaac homesteaded is now known as Ebey's Prairie. On part of his land he established a docking facility for commercial boats which he named Ebey's Landing.

In 1854, Jacob and Sarah, and their surviving children, Mary, Elizabeth Ruth, and Winfield Scott Ebey, moved from Missouri to Whidbey Island at the urging of Isaac. Also making the move to Whidbey Island were two of Jacob and Sarah's grandchildren, the children of their daughter, Mary. The family traveled by covered wagon along the Oregon Trail to get there. Isaac's brother, Winfield (1831-1865), kept a diary of the trip which has been published under the name *The 1854 Oregon Trail Diary of Winfield Scott Ebey* and is available from Amazon.com. Sarah and Jacob died at Whidbey Island, Sarah in 1859 and Jacob in 1862. Their daughter, Elizabeth Ruth, a deaf mute, also died in 1862 at the age of 33 when she accidentally fell off a cliff. Winfield died

3 years later in 1865 at the age of 34. Of all of Jacob and Sarah's eleven children, only Mary (1816-1879) lived to be more than 39 years old.

Isaac Ebey was killed in 1857 at the age of 39, by a raiding party of Haida Indians from British Columbia. He was shot to death and then beheaded. The murder was in revenge for the killing of a Haida Indian Chief and 26 other Haida Indians in an attack by the United States Naval Vessel, USS Massachusetts. The Indians knew Isaac had nothing to do with the naval attack; they chose him to kill because they wanted to kill an important person in retaliation, and they thought of Isaac as the white man's big chief. The Indians took Isaac's head when they left and used it in ceremonial dances and festivities for about 3 years, until one of Isaac's friends succeeded in buying his head from the Indians and laying it to rest with his body.

In 1942, during WWII, Fort Ebey was established on Whidbey Island and named in honor of Colonel Isaac Ebey. This was the second fort named after him; the first Fort Ebey was built in 1855-1856 during the Indian wars.

In 1978 the federal government established Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. The reserve includes 17,572 acres on Whidbey Island, and was the first historical reserve established in the United States. The 1999 Academy Award nominated movie, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, was filmed, in part, on Whidbey Island and contains shots of Ebey's Prairie.

The advice "Go West Young Man, Go West" was certainly followed by The Ebey family:

George (1764-1847) migrated from Lancaster County, PA to Huntingdon County, PA to Dublin, OH to Winchester, IL—all westward migrations;

Jacob started life in Huntingdon County, PA, moved to Dublin, OH, then to the Winchester, IL area, then to Missouri, and finished his life in Puget Sound—all the moves were to the west; and

Issac was born in Franklin County, went to Winchester, IL, and then to Missouri and finally to Whidbey, Island—further and further west.

Dublin should be proud of having the Ebey family as part of its history. They have a proud heritage of military service including heroic service in the Revolutionary War and epitomize the pioneer spirit of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

And, if Dublin was the childhood home of Isaac Ebey, which appears likely, Dublin has a right to be proud of being a part of the life of such a man of good character and ambition who made his mark on history.

On the other hand, I think the Ebey family would be interested in knowing what has happened to the town of Dublin which their family helped to establish and would be happy to know that the City of Dublin, Ohio, has grown into a well-respected and prosperous city. The 85 acre town has grown into to a City of 15,811 acres (over 24 square miles), and the population has grown from being a two family town to having a resident population of over 41,700 people.

A number of large companies are now headquartered in Dublin, including The Wendy's Company, Tim Horton's, USA, Ashland, Inc., Cardinal Health, Inc. (Ohio's largest company), Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), Nationwide Insurance, and Stanley Steamer. According to Dublin officials, Dublin's present working population is estimated to be 60,000.

Jack Nicklaus chose Dublin as the place to build the Muirfield Country Club and the championship golf course where he hosts the annual Memorial Golf Tournament which attracts most of the world's best players. Muirfield has hosted the Ryder Cup and, this year will host the President's Cup.

The Dublin Irish Festival is held in August of every year. This three day event draws over 100,000 visitors each year and is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Irish Festival in the country.

Dublin has 100 miles of bike paths and 56 public parks, two outdoor municipal swimming pools and one indoor pool and recreation center.