

GETTING HERE WAS HALF THE FUN

Hale Farm (Summit County)

Melissa Arnold

It was a rainy morning, June 12, 1810. The sky was just beginning to lighten as Jonathan Hale finished packing his two chests and trunks with necessities such as clothing, medicines, and tools that he needed once he reached his new land in the Western Reserve. After loading the wagon, he bid farewell to his wife and their three children. He promised them that he would write and reassured them that with the arrival of autumn, they would all be reunited in the new land. Mounting his wagon he departed his hometown of Glastonbury Connecticut bound for the wilderness of the Western Reserve.

It was in the spring of 1810 when Jonathan Hale first saw the maps of the Connecticut Western Reserve. The land had been a part of the vast western territory given to Connecticut by King Charles II in 1662. Hale purchased 500 acres of land sight unseen. It was decided that he would make the journey west, survey his new land and erect a suitable living structure for his family. They would then arrive in the fall.

His journey of 32 days and 646 miles was precarious, averaging over 20 miles a day. He traveled on the turnpike through New York, then on to Buffalo, Erie, Ashtabula, Willoughby, Cleveland, then followed the Cuyahoga river south, into the interior of the Reserve. On July 13, one month later, Jonathan reached his land. Here he established a family farm which served as home for three generations of Hales (1810 - 1938). Through the generosity of his great, great granddaughter in 1956, the homestead and the surrounding acreage has been preserved. Today it is a living historical museum representing life in the Western Reserve in 1850.

With use of Jonathan's personal diary and letters he wrote to his wife during his travels, we will share this journey with him and experience the hardships as well as the adventures he had along his route from Glastonbury, Connecticut to Bath, Ohio.