

Liverpool's First Christmas, 1811

In 1810, Justus Warner bought land and, on February 28, 1811, arrived with part of his family to settle near Columbia and Grafton Roads in Liverpool Township, AKA Valley City. Now known as Hardscrabble, it was the first permanent settlement in Medina County. In 1861, Justus's granddaughter, Rhoda Hinckley, wrote these family remembrances of the Christmases immediately before and after the move.

Christmas 1810 – Waterbury, CT

"... We go back a half-century, to the State of Old Connecticut, in the town of Waterbury at the house of Justus Warner, where we cooked the last Christmas supper ere the departure of Justus and others for New Connecticut, as Ohio was by them termed. There, the goose was dissected, the puddings done justice by, and after the Good-Byes were passed as freely as the cake and cider which preceded them, then came the packing and confusion incident to such occasions. Justus, with his son Alpheus, and Minerva, his young bride, equipped with two two-horse teams, with fifty long corded, wooden, Waterbury clocks; two young men named Ely L. Seeley and David Scoville took leave of their homes and friends with throbbing hearts and tearful faces."

Christmas 1811 – Liverpool Twp, OH

"Moses Deming had begun keeping house by himself, Oliver Terrill was hired by Alpheus to do a job of chopping, and at Christmas there was to be something done in the then wilderness, to hand down to posterity. So every man then in town, which was Oliver, Seeley, John Jacobs and Alpheus, all chopped at once on a large oak tree near where Hubbard's house now stands, and every woman, which was Ruth and Minerva, looked on to see it fall. The first cut made one hundred and sixty rails. The weather was so warm that baby [baby was Sally Urania Warner, first white child born in Medina County, on May 31, 1811] needed a parasol over it to keep the sun off, and so cold in Connecticut that the illumination was given up – so said the letters of Aaron [Justus' son and Rhoda's to-be father who were yet in Waterbury] and Minerva. Then came supper, and the wild turkey was roasted, the wild jokes were cracked, and the wild laughter rang out through the wild forest, and every man, woman and child sat around the shingle table of our hostess. So much for Christmas."

The Elyria Constitution added this: *"At this Christmas party the table was made of puncheons, with blocks of wood for legs, and seats of the same construction, and the dinner consisted of Johnny cake, venison, wild turkey and pumpkin pie, and instead of coffee they had metheglin [mead] made of wild honey. At the time, the country was inhabited by Indians and wild animals; beaver, bears, wolves, hedge-hogs, wildcats and deer were plenty."*

Provided by Liverpool Township Historical Society, Valley City, OH