



Murdock was prosperous farmer

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The following information and photo has recently come to the Orleans Department of History from the estate of the late Fern Blackburn.

Seymour Murdock was born Dec. 11, 1763 in Amenia, Dutchess County, where the family came sometime before the Revolution, as he and two brothers served in the war. He married Catherine Buck of Amenia.

After the war was over, Mr. Murdock decided to make a new home in the western part of the state. Having heard that the Holland Land Company was selling land grants and some settlements were being made along what is known as the old Ridge Road, he started in quest of a home. Records show he obtained a parcel of land in October 1809, and another in May 1810.

In the spring of 1810, he started with his wife and 12 children in a Pennsylvania wagon and an ox team for their future home. Traveling was very difficult, as it was almost an unbroken, dense forest.

At Avon, he left his family, and he and his eldest son started on foot for the Batavia Land Office. Then on to Buffalo, and along the Niagara River to Lewiston. Then down the Ridge Road to about two

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miles east of the Niagara County line, where they came upon two men eating by a tree that had just fallen. He purchased their right to their claims in May 1810. Then, they returned to Avon for their family. They had been away from Dutchess County for more than a month and encountered many hardships, especially in fording the streams with high banks. They finally reached the new home June 1, 1810, living in their wagon for about six weeks while a cabin was being built. This log cabin was on the south side of Ridge Road, on the east side of the farm.

It was a perfectly beautiful country with sturdy oaks on the south side as far as the eye could reach, and a more dense and varied growth on the north. The lands were divided some time later with the sons, and some of them going to other parts of the country. This was the first permanent settlement in the Town of Ridgeway. Others soon followed.

During the War of 1812, every able-bodied man took up arms. Four of his sons answered the call.

And there were not enough left to provide food for the families; there was a great deal of suffering from shortage of food and other hardships. Then, following this came sickness — fever, ague, etc. — so many families left the country.

In 1813, Mr. Murdock built the first framed barn in the Town of Ridgeway, asking Gen. Izard to have his men assist in raising the frame, as they were passing on their way to Fort Niagara. This barn is still in good condition at the present time. Nearby, there is an historic marker which mentions historical facts including that very barn. Mr. Murdock brought the first oxen, horses and cows into the Town of Ridgeway.

By his sterling integrity and perseverance, he became a prosperous farmer. His sons all had farms of their own. Mrs. Murdock died Sept. 27, 1823, and Mr. Murdock 10 years later, April 14, 1833. Both are buried on a family plot, on land once taken up by him in 1810.

Our photo, taken in 1928, shows the Murdock Family plot with Seymour's headstone in the center at West Ridgeway Cemetery.

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