

24 Nov 1902

## IN MEMORIAM

James Rennison West, Born Oct. 9, 1809 and Died Nov. 24, 1902 Monday night, Nov. 24, at the residence of his son-in-law, Seneca A. Smith, of Lincoln Township, death took from our midst a truly remarkable man. Even his birthplace, Carlisle, England, might rightly be so called, for it is the sight of an ancient Roman garrison, a cathedral city, the seat of a bishop, was the prison place for a while of Mary Queen of Scots, and a walled city, around and in which the warcries of the Scottish clans have often been heard. When he left for America the walls were still standing, pierced by three gates, out of which went the Scotch, Irish and English respectively, and so great was their hatred for each other, it was woe for the luckless head which through inadvertence or purposely took the wrong path.

June 4, 1835, he married Miss Rebecca A. Hedges, a native of Virginia to whom the following children were born: Dorothy Jane, Nancy E., William H., Elizabeth A., James T., Marie E., all of whom have passed to the great beyond except Nancy E., with whom he has made his home since the decease of his wife, Dec. 26, 1891.

He was remarkable for the great age which he attained; four score, ten and three and more had passed over his head. All the changes and improvements that men of fifty, sixty, and aye seventy-five years of age have witnessed, he also saw, and more too. When fifteen he was an earnest spectator of the landing of Lafayette on Federal Hill in Baltimore; at eighteen gazed upon the ceremonies of breaking the ground for the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, and rejoicing in the procession headed by Charles Carroll of Carrollton as they paraded the streets of the city in honor of the occasion; and at the time of his death was perhaps the only man in Ohio who could rightfully claim the honor of having shaken hands and conversed with the last survivor of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. He was a resident of Westfield township, this county, two years before it was formed and four years before the railroad came. He was born in the same year as the martyred Lincoln, and was co-temporary with the poets Whittier and Holmes. Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson have long since been canonized in the political calendars of their respective followers, yet this man in 1832 voted for Henry Clay for president against Jackson, and only this week entered into rest.

But grandfather West was never old. He renewed his youth like the eagles; age might set a coronal of grey upon his head and bleach his beard to the color of snow, but could not change his disposition. His face was ever towards the morning, and until a few weeks before his departure his eye was bright, his face as rosy, and his form as nearly erect as when in his youth he dreamed of days and joys to come. He visited alone the World's Fair at Chicago when past eighty, examined with interest everything there, and in a highly intelligent manner on his return home gave a description of the same. He was always interested in all kinds of improvements, and being a weaver, said the big looms throw more and more faster shuttles than the old way, but they have not yet gone beyond the single thread. He wished much to go to Cardington once more that he might view the natural gas plant and observe its workings, and only a short time before his demise expressed a wish to be taken to the barn that he might know for himself how a corn shredder worked. He was an optimist, and the cry of the "good old times" would provoke him. Once when hearing a person speak in this manner and fretting about the present he quietly remarked: "Yes, they were good times; I know all about them. I was living in West Rushville, Fairfield county, then. It took twenty-five cents postage for a letter to Cincinnati, and I had to save every bit of silver I could get to pay it with, because our paper money was good for nothing and the government would not take it. Yes, I tell you they were good old times."

He was not an educated man in one sense of the word, but his long experience and observation had made him wise. He was a great reader, and the Bible, Shakespeare and Burns were familiar to him,