

The History of Perry County, Pennsylvania, Including Descriptions of Indian and Pioneer Life from the Time of Earliest Settlement. Sketches of Its Noted Men and Women and Many Professional Men, H.H. Hain, Harrisburg, PA 1922

The Blaine Family.



JAMES G. BLAINE.

The greatest American Statesman of the last half century. As there never was a photograph of General Ephraim Blaine, included in this chapter, none can be printed. The former was a descendant of the Pioneers and the latter himself warranted lands in what is now Perry County, near Blain.

The family from which sprang **James G. Blaine**, the statesman, was one of the pioneer families of the territory comprising Perry County. Several members of the family were officers in the Revolutionary War, and one, **Ephraim Blaine**, financed the military operations of the colonies. **Ephraim Blaine** was a boy in what was then Toboyne Township, but in that part of the township which later became Jackson. Before the war had progressed very far he was a general. His brother, **William Blaine**, who owned the **Solomon Bower** farm, was a captain in Colonel **Frederick Watts'** battalion, having charge of the Fourth Company. Another brother, **James Blaine**, was the first lieutenant.

The great-great-grandfather of **James Gillispie Blaine**, the great statesman, Secretary of State, and once nominated for the Presidency of the United States, was the pioneer of that name who located in Toboyne Township, then an outpost of civilization.

His name was **James Blaine**, and that of his wife, **Isabella**. He took up a large tract of land and evidently ranked as a very wealthy man. There were at least four Blaines—**James, Ephraim, Alexander**, and **William**—who were early settlers and warranted lands. Of these men the first named was the father, and the other three, sons, who on attaining their majority, also located claims among these rich and fertile acres. All that portion of the Blain-the Borough town dropping the final “e”—once belonged to the first James Blaine, mentioned above. Also both of the former **Samuel Woods** farms, the Stokes' mill property, and part of the holdings of **James Woods**. As late as March 24, 1777, a deed from **James Blaine** and **Isabella**, his wife, residents of Toboyne Township conveys to **William Blaine**, one of their sons, four hundred acres in Toboyne. As **James Blaine** was one of the substantial men of the province, also having property at Philadelphia tradition alone would tell us that he would be at Philadelphia - then the heart of the colonies - using every power at his command to preserve their liberties.

As the lands which now comprise Perry County were at that time a part of Cumberland, the will of **James Blaine** is found recorded at the courthouse at Carlisle, and that will establishes the fact that elder Blaine resided in Toboyne Township (now Jackson) in 1792, and that he in all probability died there. After the death of his first wife, **Isabella**, he had married **Elizabeth Scadden (Carskaden)**, the daughter of a neighbor in Toboyne, and the will dated August 11, 1792, names as the executors of the estate, "my beloved son, **Ephraim**, and my beloved wife, **Elizabeth**." In the very beginning of the will he states his residence as "of Toboyne Township." It was proven May 19, 1794, shortly after his death. An extract from the will contains the provision:

"The house and garden I now possess be reserved and given to my widow and children begotten by me with her, together with sufficient pasturage for one horse and one cow, summer and winter, during her life, and that the plantation owned by me let out to rent, by me executors, the rents and profits arising from same to be given to my widow and children to raise and educate them till the children come of age.

"I give and bequeath to my beloved wife, Elizabeth Blaine, one horse beast and the choice of any of my cows, together with one-third of the rents and profits arising and coming from my estate, during her natural life," etc.

A plantation was willed "to my beloved son, **James Scadden Blaine**, with the provision that he pay certain sums to his sister **Margaret Blaine**. To **Alexander Blaine, Eleanor Lyons, Agnes McMurray, Mary Davison** and **Isabella Mitchell** be willed five shillings each. (Book E, p. 330, Register of Wills, Courthouse, Carlisle.)

Evidently these were grown to manhood and womanhood and were well taken care of through marriage and otherwise. The custom of willing five shillings to married daughters at that period seems to have been somewhat general, the property going to the sons and oft times the larger portion to the first-born son.

About 1745 **James Blaine** and **Isabella**, his wife, took their little son **Ephraim** and journeyed from Londonderry, Ireland, to America, tarrying in Lancaster County, near Donegal, "on their way to the western world," which for them proved to be Toboyne Township. They stopped in Carlisle long enough to become well known and then took up a tract of land in Toboyne Township, then on the frontiers and in what is now a part of Perry County, and described as "on the south side of the blue Juniata." They assumed a leading part in the affairs of the province as long as it continued a province, an active interest in the state when it became a state, and in the nation when the nation was born.

Successful in every way, happy in his home, the father of nine children who survived him, his first recorded grief was the death of his wife, **Isabella**. He subsequently married Elizabeth, daughter of **George Carskaden**, of Toboyne Township. Of the nine children, the little Irishman, the oldest, was sent to Rev. Dr. Allison's school in Philadelphia. There is a logical reason for sending young Blaine there, inasmuch as Dr. Allison himself was from Ireland (Donegal) and had a farm in Toboyne Township, adjoining the Blaine home.

On graduating at Dr. Allison's school in Philadelphia, **Ephraim Blaine**, his son, became a commissary sergeant with the proprietary government. Then, when the Indian treaty of 1765 was signed he did as many of our World War heroes did so recently, married "the girl he left behind," **Rebecca Galbraith**, descended of a staunch stock and a resident of Carlisle, whom he probably learned to know while residing there as a boy while on their way to take up lands in the province. The lure of this beautiful girl is responsible for his subsequent location there, no doubt, where he later became sheriff (1772). Of course men from what is now Perry County were also officials of Cumberland at that time, it being an integral part thereof. His father was one of his sureties, and as the Executive Council, composed of five good men and true, attested to the recorder of Cumberland County that they did approve of **Robert Callender** and **James Blaine** as sufficient sureties, it follows that they were substantial men.

This man **Callender** was a very wealthy man, an Indian trader, and in a single encounter, while convoying a train of eighty-one pack-horse loads of goods, sixty-three were destroyed, the value of which was three thousand pounds. In vain he protested that they were not for the hostile Indians, but were for the Illinois, to be stored at Fort Pitt. He was charged with intending "to steal up the goods" before the trade was legally opened. He stood on good footing with young Blaine and his father, as the three combined to be "'held and firmly bound unto our sovereign Lord, George, the Third, by the grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King Defender of the Faith," &c, in the sum of two thousand pounds lawful money of Pennsylvania to be paid to our sovereign Lord the King, his heirs and successors, to which payment well and truly to be made we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors and administrators and every one of them jointly and severally firmly by these presents, sealed with our seals and dated the fourteenth day of October, in the eleventh year of his majesty's reign, before John Agnew, Esq., one of his majesty's justices of the peace of the county of Cumberland aforesaid." A pound of Pennsylvania currency at that time was worth two and two-thirds dollars. Prior to being made sheriff **Ephraim Blaine** was also an Indian trader for a few years. When a posse rescued **Frederick Stump** from the Carlisle jail, as noted in our Indian chapters, Mr. Blaine was one who rallied to the aid of the sheriff.

When the war with the mother country broke out he was commissioned a lieutenant, later promoted to Colonel and by a resolution of the Continental Congress was made chief of the commissary department. He was then about thirty-five years of age. It was he, the Toboyne Township boy, who organized the farmers and the millers and kept Valley Forge from starving while the Tories in the great city were dancing and engaged in merry-making. In fact, many of the farmers were sending their wheat to Philadelphia to the dancing Tories instead of to the starving soldiers at Valley Forge. Practically everybody knows of the starving Continental Army at Valley Forge, but everybody does not know that hogsheads of shoes, stockings and clothing lay at different points awaiting teams and money to pay teamsters. The dearth of money is best realized when it is known that the colonies had voted eight million dollars for a year's war expenses and at the end of five months had actually only furnished twenty thousand dollars.

But **Ephraim Blaine**, this boy who had come out of Toboyne Township, now a part of Perry County, already a man of affairs, having money of his own, his people having money and having a wide "acquaintance among the well-to-do, raised the money privately to keep the war going,

and at one time—in January, 1780—the Supreme Executive Council drew a warrant in his favor for one million dollars to reimburse him in part for advances and means which he had provided.

That the Continental Congress evidently appreciated what he did and was doing is evidenced by an act of 1780 granting him "a salary at the rate of \$40,000 by the year until the further order of Congress, also six rations a day and forage for four horses, for he was then a general, having been promoted to that position April 6 1777. Later he spent his winters in Philadelphia, where his friend, George Washington, first President of the United States, resided, it being then the social centre of the new country, as the sessions of the Congress were held there.

Duels were yet in vogue in those days, and in the duel between **John Duncan** and **James Lamberton** in 1793, **Ephraim Blaine** was chosen as a second, and when the two met on the field of honor **Duncan** was killed. He was a brother of **Judge Duncan**, and years after **Lamberton's** grandson, **Robert A. Lamberton**, became president of Lehigh University.

Rebecca Galbraith, the wife of **Ephraim Blaine**, died in 1795. They had two sons, **James** and **Robert**, they being of the third generation of **Blaines** in America. **James** married **Margaret Lyon**, his cousin, whose father, **Samuel Lyon**, had taken up two hundred and seventy-three acres of land in Tuscarora. (This Lyon family should not be confused with that of the late Judge Lyons, of the Perry-Juniata judicial district.) **James** was sent abroad twice when a young man, being under voting age. It is recorded that John Bannister Gibson, the illustrious Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania (of whom more elsewhere in this book), after **Blaine's** death, wrote of him: "**James Blaine**, at the time of his return from Europe, was considered to be among the most accomplished and finest looking gentlemen in Philadelphia, then the centre of fashion, elegance and learning on this continent." His reputation as a model gentleman was honestly sustained throughout life.

Ephraim Blaine died in 1804, but seven years previous he had married **Sarah Elizabeth Postlethwaite Duncan**, widow of his friend, who was killed in the duel previously mentioned, and who gave birth to a son who was also named **Ephraim**. His two sons by his first wife each had a son also named **Ephraim**, but the line of descent of **James G. Blaine** is from **Ephraim Lyon** (his mother's maiden name), the son of **James**, he being of the fourth generation in America. At one time there were four **Ephraim Blaines** at Washington College, all related.

Ephraim L. Blaine went to Washington College and studied law with **David Watts**, late judge, whose son later was United States minister to Austria. The father, **James Blaine**, had in the meantime settled at Sewickley, and there his son **Ephraim L.** met and paid court to **Maria Gillespie**, whom he married. They moved to Brownsville, to a house which his father had previously erected, and there, in the first stone house west of the Monongahela River, **James Gillespie Blaine** was born.

He graduated at Washington College in 1847, and was called to Maine to edit the first Whig newspaper, and made Maine his permanent home, he was elected to the Maine Legislature and was a delegate to the second National Republican Convention, which nominated Lincoln. He was elected to Congress in 1862 and served over twenty years, being speaker part of the time. He entered the sixth National Republican Convention at Cincinnati in 1876, with 285 votes for

President of the United States, the second highest being Oliver P. Morton with 125, but Rutherford B. Hayes won on the seventh ballot with 384 votes. Hayes entered the balloting with 61 votes, while 378 were necessary for a choice. Hayes became President.

At the seventh National Convention at Chicago, in 1880, **James G. Blaine** entered with 284, while U. S. Grant had 304. James A. Garfield broke the Grant-Blaine deadlock in the thirty-sixth ballot with 399 votes. Garfield had no votes on the first ballot, and only two on the second. Necessary to a choice, 378 Garfield was elected.

At the eighth National Convention at Chicago, in 1884, **Mr. Blaine** entered with 334 ½ votes, Chester A. Arthur being second with 278. **Blaine** was nominated on the fourth ballot with 541 votes. Necessary to a choice, 410. He was defeated at the general elections by Grover Cleveland, through the disaffection of Senator Roscoe Conkling, of New York, thus losing that state by a very small majority.

At the ninth National Convention at Chicago, in 1888, he polled almost a half-hundred votes for a half-dozen ballots, although not a candidate. Benjamin Harrison was nominated and elected. At the tenth National Convention, in 1892, he received 182 votes, Benjamin Harrison being nominated, but was defeated by Grover Cleveland at the polls.

No other man in American history carried a following so long or was voted for in so many national conventions. He was balloted for at five national conventions. He was twice Secretary of State (under Presidents Jas. A. Garfield and Benjamin Harrison), and was the greatest statesman since the days of Clay and Webster. **James G. Blaine**, like William J. Bryan of our day, was a noted orator, which statement recalls a paragraph from the works of that famous Perry Countian, Col. A. K. McClure, in which he says: "It is a notable fact in political history that no preeminent political orator ever succeeded to the Presidency."

Concisely stated, the Blaine generations in America which sprang from the original settler in what is now Perry County, are :

1. **James Blaine**, who patented land in Toboyne Township.
2. **Ephraim Blaine**, who was also from Toboyne Township, and became Commissary General in the Revolution.
3. **James Blaine**.
4. **Ephraim Lyon Blaine**, an attorney.
5. **James Gillespie Blaine**, nominated for the Presidency, Congressman, Secretary of State, statesman.

As part of the Borough of Blain (the final "e" being dropped) was located on lands originally warranted by the **Blaines**, the town was called Blain. Under the chapters devoted to Jackson and Toboyne Townships are facts in reference to those early land locations. The **Stokes'** mill property, at Blain, was originally the **Blaine** mill, and in the year of the county's erection, in 1820, on April 20, it passed from **James S. Blaine** to **David Moreland**. It was built by **James Blaine**, the head of the **Blaine** clan, and helped supply food to the Continental Army.

James Blaine, the ancestor of this famous family, was one of the men who warranted lands on February 3, 1755, the very first day of the allotment of lands which now comprise Perry County. He located 100 acres that day, its location adjoining **John Carrothers**. It lies south of Laurel Run and north of the spur of which Pilot Hill is the terminus, in Tyrone Township, not far from Landisburg. There is no evidence that he ever resided there. By referring to the chapters on Jackson Township and Toboyne Township more will be learned of their early holdings, as it was there that they resided.

The **Blaine** line of descent, as stated in your letter, is correct. **John Ewing Blaine**.—From a letter to the author. **Mr. Blaine** is the author of "**The Blaine Family**."
Note.—Many letters of **Ephraim Blaine** are to be found filed in the Congressional Library at Washington, D. C.

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