

elder bushes and high weeds occupied the remaining parts of the town."

By 1810, only 84 people lived in Rossville. The same census placed Hamilton population at 326 people.

By the 1830 census - when the towns were in the midst of an unsuccessful four-year merger attempt - Rossville had grown to 629 people while Hamilton counted 1,079.

Rossville was a young town then, 80 percent of its residents 30 years of age or younger. The census broke down this way:

42.9 % under the age of 15.

(267 = 131 males; 136 females).

37.4% from 16 through 30 years.

(234 = 131 males; 103 females).

15.7% between 30 and 50 years.

(98 = 52 males; 46 females).

3.9% over 50 years of age.

(25 = 12 males; 13 females).

No age information was reported for the four "free colored persons" living in Rossville in 1830.

"In the upper part of Rossville is a flour mill, saw mill (and) wool-carding machine owned by Thomas Kenworthy." McBride wrote in 1831. "The works are propelled by water taken from the Miami River. They are convenient, in good repair and do a profitable business," he reported.

"About a mile below Rossville is a flour mill and saw mill owned by John Traber," McBride noted. It also was powered by water from the river. "This mill has been in operation many years. It has and still does an extensive business."

By 1850, Rossville had 1,447 residents and Hamilton 3,219, a total of 4,657.

In April 1854, voters in both towns approved a merger. It was effective in February 1855. That month, after 51 years, Rossville disappeared from the map.

## Northwest Territory Timeline, 1783-1799

- 1783 Sept. 3. American Revolution ended with Treaty of Paris; Great Britain ceded the area north of the Ohio River to the United States.
- 1785 May 20. The Land Ordinance of 1785 approved by Congress, determining how land would be divided and sold in the Northwest Territory.
- 1787 July 13. Northwest Ordinance approved by Congress, creating government for the territory and outlining steps to statehood.
- 1787 May 25-Sept. 17. United States Constitution written at convention in Philadelphia.
- 1788 April. Marietta became the first permanent settlement in Ohio, Columbia Nov. 28 and Losantiville (later Cincinnati) Dec. 28 became first settlements in the Miami Purchase of John Cleves Symmes.
- 1788 June 21. U. S. Constitution effective as New Hampshire is ninth state to ratify it.
- 1788 Sept. 13. New York chosen as capital of United States by Congress, which had been meeting there since Jan. 11, 1785.
- 1789 April 30. George Washington inaugurated as first president of the United States.
- 1790 Dec. 6. Philadelphia became temporary capital of the United States.
- 1791 Sept. 30. Fort Hamilton completed by the army of Gen. Arthur St. Clair, which is defeated by Native Americans Nov. 4, 1791.
- 1791 Dec. 15. Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, ratified.
- 1792 June 1. Kentucky admitted to the Union as the 15th state.
- 1793 March 4. George Washington inaugurated for second term as president.
- 1794 Aug. 20. Gen. Anthony Wayne's army, whose supply posts included Fort Hamilton, defeated the Native Americans in the Battle of Fallen Timbers.
- 1794 Nov. 19. Jay's Treaty signed, settling some remaining disputes between Great Britain and the United States.
- 1795 Aug. 3. The Treaty of Greenville ended the series of wars with the Native Americans in the Northwest Territory.
- 1796 June 1. Tennessee admitted to the Union as the 16th state (Ohio became 17th in 1803).
- 1797 March 4. John Adams inaugurated as second president of the United States.
- 1799 Dec. 14. George Washington died at Mount Vernon, Va.

## 1800-1805: Crucial years for U. S., Ohio and Rossville

- 1800 May 10. Harrison Land Act approved by Congress, liberalizing payment for public land and encouraging sales west of the Great Miami River.
- 1800 June 15. The nation's capital moved from Philadelphia to the District of Columbia; John Adams first president to occupy the White House. Philadelphia had been the capital since Dec. 6, 1790.
- 1800 Oct. 1. Spain ceded Louisiana back to France in secret Treaty of San Ildefonso; territory had been acquired by Spain from France in 1762.
- 1801 March 4. Thomas Jefferson inaugurated as third president of the United States.
- 1801 April. Land for **Rossville** purchased in sale of public land west of the Great Miami River.
- 1802 April 30. U. S. Congress enacted an enabling act for Ohio statehood.
- 1802 Oct. 16. Spain closed the port of New Orleans to U. S. cargo, violating a 1795 treaty.
- 1802 Nov. 29. Convention, meeting in Chillicothe, completed constitution for the proposed state of Ohio.
- 1803 Jan. 11. Election in proposed state of Ohio for governor and members of General Assembly. Edward Tiffin elected governor.
- 1803 Jan. 18. President Jefferson proposed government sponsorship of a scientific exploration west of the Mississippi River; birth of the expedition to be led by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.
- 1803 March 1. Ohio became the 17th state in the Union; capital at Chillicothe.
- 1803 March 24. Ohio General Assembly created **Butler County**, taking the land from Hamilton County.
- 1803 April 15. Three commissioners chosen to select county seat for **Butler County**.
- 1803 April 19. Spain reopened the port of New Orleans to American trade.
- 1803 April 30. Preliminary agreement on the Louisiana Purchase by the United States reached in Paris by U. S. and French representatives.
- 1803 July 15. **Hamilton** selected as the county seat of **Butler County**.
- 1803 Dec. 20. Louisiana Purchase is completed by the United States and France, giving the United States complete control of the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans.
- 1804 March 14. **Rossville** plat recorded and the sale of land started.
- 1804 March 26. Harrison Land Act of 1800 amended by Congress, including extending land payments over 10 years.
- 1804 May 14. The Lewis and Clark expedition left St. Louis to start its explorations.
- 1804 May 16. Second public auction of **Rossville** land conducted.
- 1804 Aug. 2. **Hamilton** Post Office (first in Butler County) established with John Reily as postmaster
- 1805 March 4. President Thomas Jefferson began second term.
- 1805 Nov. 7. Lewis and Clark reached the Pacific Ocean; returned to St. Louis Sept. 23, 1806.

## Town name honored Pennsylvanian

*James Ross championed free navigation of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers for U. S. citizens during 1794-1803 term in Senate*

Rossville was named in honor of Sen. James Ross of Pennsylvania, who had worked for Ohio statehood in Congress.

Ross was born July 12, 1762, near Delta in York County, Pa. After graduation from Princeton, Ross was a Latin instructor at Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, Pa. He was admitted to the bar in Washington County in 1784.

In 1794, Ross helped resolve the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania.

During his senate career (1794-1803), the Pittsburgh resident championed free navigation of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers for U. S. citizens.

This included efforts to keep the port of New Orleans open to Ohio Valley merchants when the port was owned by Spain and France.

The European owners often imposed prohibitive fees or demanded bribes from Americans who brought their goods to New Orleans.

In the 1790s, and until 1803, the "Mississippi Question" was a hot political issue on the frontier along the Ohio River - including western Pennsylvania and what became Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, Indiana and Illinois.

The rivers were vital to the economies of those areas. The Appalachian barrier prohibited sending their products east.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 had promised that "the navigable waters leading into the Mississippi and St. Lawrence, and the carrying places between the same, shall be common highways and forever free . . . without any tax, impost or duty."

A petition to Congress in 1798 stressed western desperation about securing the right to use the Mississippi. "If Congress refuses us effectual protection, if it forsakes us, we will



adopt measures which our safety requires, even if they endanger the peace of the Union and our connection with the other states. No protection, no allegiance," the petition threatened.

After leaving the U. S. Senate, Ross was a Pittsburgh councilman for 17 years. He also helped start Steubenville, Ohio, 36 miles below Pittsburgh on the Ohio River.

He was an unsuccessful candidate for governor in 1799, 1801 and 1808. Ross died Nov. 27, 1847, in Pittsburgh.

# John Sutherland boosted Rossville

*Former army packhorse captain and pioneer merchant took lead in development of new community*

John Sutherland - Rossville's most active proprietor - is regarded as Hamilton's first merchant by James McBride, the community's earliest historian.

Sutherland was born in 1771 in Scotland. In 1788, at age 17, he came to the United States with his family, which settled in western Virginia.

He moved west to the Ohio frontier in 1793 to join the army of Major-Gen. Anthony Wayne as a captain of packhorse. He supervised several men and 40 horses who hauled food and supplies from Fort Washington in Cincinnati to the soldiers at Fort Hamilton and Fort Greenville.

After the Treaty of Greenville in 1795 ended the Indian wars in the region, Sutherland settled in Hamilton where he opened a store.

His business was in a double log building, which, according to McBride, "stood south of the pickets of the garrison" which had been Fort Hamilton from 1791 until 1795. The store site today would be in the vicinity of the parking lot of the Fitton Center for the Creative Arts at South Monument Avenue and Ludlow Street.

At first, a major part of his business, which included fur trading, was with the Native Americans who were still hunting and living in the unsettled region west of the Great Miami River.

As late as 1808, according to McBride, "a party of 80 to 100 Indians came in and encamped in the lower part of Rossville, where they remained several weeks trading with Mr. Sutherland." Later, McBride said, "when the Indians retired further west (to Indiana), he employed several persons, whom he supplied

with goods, to go to their towns . . . and trade with them."

Among Sutherland's employees or agents were John McClellan, who lived in Hamilton, and David Conner of Rossville.

Later, McBride explained, Sutherland "traded largely in beef cattle, which he purchased in Kentucky and the Miami Valley, and drove them through the wilderness to Detroit, where he disposed of them principally to citizens of Canada."

Sutherland operated his Hamilton store, and later a second one in Dayton, in a partnership with Henry Brown as Sutherland & Brown until 1810. Brown also was listed as one of the five original proprietors of Rossville.

Sutherland and Samuel Dick were regarded as the proprietors and promoters of Rossville by 1805.

"Although interested in the sale of Rossville lots, Mr. Sutherland always lived east of the river," observed Mrs. Alta Harvey Heiser, who conducted the most exhaustive study of the area's earliest residents.

In 1803, Sutherland advertised his store and tavern in Hamilton and a Hamilton-Rossville ferry in a Cincinnati newspaper. Later, he owned a tannery in Rossville near the Miami Bridge.

In March 1813, Sutherland paid \$184 for lot 107 along High and North Front streets and lot 108 along North Front and Market streets in Hamilton, both measuring 100 x 200 feet. He purchased them from the heirs of Israel Ludlow, Hamilton's founder.

Sutherland built a house and a new store on the northeast corner of High and Front streets, now the site of the Butler County Administration Center.

About the same time, he formed a partnership with a brother-in-law, James P. Ramsey, and the firm of Sutherland and Ramsey continued until 1820 when it was dissolved.

By 1820, Sutherland faced financial problems and some of his property was taken to settle debts.

McBride said Sutherland, in about 1818, Sutherland "engaged largely in the pork and flour trade, and made heavy shipments to New Orleans. This was a most unfortunate time to embark on that trade, and many of those engaged in it failed," McBride said. "Mr. Sutherland lost heavily."

McBride said Sutherland - who also had owned real estate elsewhere in Ohio and in Indiana - once was "undoubtedly the wealthiest man in Butler County, and among the most wealthy in the state" before his death in Hamilton Sept. 9, 1834, at age 63.

Sutherland's first wife, Mary Scott of Fayette County, Ky., died within a few years of their marriage. Their son, Alexander, died young. Sutherland's second wife, Mary Steele of Kentucky, also died soon after their marriage, leaving no children.

In 1810, the 39-year-old merchant and land speculator married Nancy Ramsey of Ligonier Valley, Pennsylvania. She died in Hamilton at age 68 March 21, 1855, surviving her husband by more than 20 years.

**Six and a fourth Cents Reward,  
Ranaway on the 21st of April, 1822.**

***Samuel Richie,***

an indented apprentice to the Tanning and Currying business in Rossville Ohio; he had on when he left this, a green cloth frock coat, black pantaloons, red striped vest, and an old rorum hat. Any person taking up said apprentice, shall be entitled to the above reward but no charges paid.

**WILLIAM PORTER.**

**Rossville, May 16, 1822**

**27-3w**

## Samuel Dick helped develop Rossville

*Irish native also farmer  
and miller south of town*

Samuel Dick wasn't an original owner of Rossville and never lived there. But the native of Ireland joined John Sutherland in promoting development of the town.

Dick was born April 21, 1764, in Antrim County, and orphaned at a young age. In 1783, at age 19, he immigrated to the United States, first to Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Later, near Gettysburg, Pa., Dick worked as a brandy distiller for a farmer. When he earned enough to buy a horse, saddle and bridle, he crossed the Appalachians to western Pennsylvania. Again, Dick was employed as a distiller.

There he met Martha Allen Gillespie, of Washington County, who became his bride in the winter of 1785-86.

Four years later, the couple - with two children - risked the trip down the Ohio River to Cincinnati. It was the time of determined Native American resistance to settlement in the Northwest Territory.

John Cleves Symmes' real estate venture had been called the Miami Purchase because it was north of the Ohio and between the Little Miami and Great Miami rivers. But some who had bought land from Symmes said it should be called "the Miami Slaughterhouse" because of deadly Indian raids on settlers.

In response, President George Washington and Secretary of War Henry Knox authorized the raising of an army to quell the Indian resistance. It took four years - and the destruction of two armies - to accomplish.

In two-year-old Cincinnati - with fewer than 200 residents - Dick opened a tavern and a grocery business. His customers included the

Indian-fighting armies of Generals Josiah Harmar, Arthur St. Clair and Anthony Wayne.

Wayne's 1794 victory over the Indians and the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, renewed interest in the rich land west of the Great Miami River.

In the 1801 sale of that public land, Dick purchased a full section of rich bottomland in what later became Ross Township in Butler County. In 1802 he moved to his 640-acre tract on the river below the mouth of Indian Creek. There, in Section 34 of Ross Township, Samuel and Martha Dick raised four sons and five daughters.

In October 1803 he won election to the Ohio General Assembly in Chillicothe, Ohio's first state capital. He didn't seek re-election and never again was a candidate for public office.

Instead, Dick farmed and operated a grist mill, built for him in 1805 by Jacob Hyde. The mill - in operation for 75 years - was a commercial center in Ross Township for more than a quarter century.

Dick's Mill also became known as Dick's Ford or Dick's Crossing. The ford there - near the county's southern boundary - afforded one of the few relatively safe crossing points along the Great Miami River before bridges were built. An 1882 Butler County history called it "the original ford for the entire northwestern part of Butler County, and a large area of country in Indiana."

A Dick's Mill or Dick's Mills post office served the area from Jan. 15, 1819, until July 31, 1834.

Postmasters at Dick's Mill were George Dick (a son of Samuel), who served from 1819 until his death in 1828, and his widow, Jane Dick, who filled the post until the office closed.

The post office moved to Venice (Ross) after the opening of the first Venice Bridge, which was built southwest of Dick's Mill in Hamilton County.

Samuel Dick also owned a saw mill on Indian Creek, a little more than a mile below Millville. It was built for him in 1818, but operated by Jesse Monroe before it was destroyed by fire.

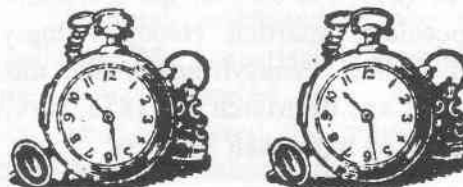
Although he resided about six to seven miles south of Rossville, Samuel Dick combined with Sutherland in developing the town.

Dick was a charter member of the board of trustees of the Miami Bridge Company, which opened the first span connecting Hamilton and Rossville in 1819. He served in that post for nearly 30 years (1817-1846). With 30 shares, Dick was one of the largest stockholders in the privately-owned toll bridge.

His oldest daughter, Elizabeth, was the wife of Joseph Wilson, a Rossville merchant who became the town's first postmaster in 1819.

Dick, 82, died Aug. 4, 1846. He was buried in Millville beside his wife, who had died 13 years earlier.

## Clock and Watch Making



### **ISRAEL GREGG,**

IS NOW CARRYING ON THE CLOCK AND WATCH MAKING BUSINESS

*In all its various branches, in Rossville, on the corner east of Mr. Isaac Fulconer's Tavern.*

**H**E has recently procured a Journeyman from the East who is a professional Workman at the Watch Business, and will be able to repair all kinds of Watches, such as Horizontal, Patent Lever, Duplex, Musical, Repeating, and Plain—with neatness and despatch.

He also has now on the way from Philadelphia, an assortment of Clock Materials, which he will make, warrant, and sell, at the most reduced prices.

Rossville, Nov. 8, 1825. 208—tf.

## Rossville's other founders offered varied backgrounds

*Author of Ohio Constitution,  
former soldiers, businessmen  
among town's original investors*

Besides John Sutherland, the other original proprietors of Rossville were Jacob Burnet, James Smith, William Ruffin and Henry Brown.

### Jacob Burnet

Burnet was born Feb. 22, 1770, in Newark, N. J., a son of Dr. William Burnett, surgeon-general of the revolutionary army and a member of the Continental Congress. He was graduated from Princeton University in 1791. In 1796, at age 26, came to Cincinnati where he was admitted to the bar and started a distinguished political career.

Burnett was a leader in forming the territorial legislature in the Northwest Territory in 1798, and served in that body until 1802, when it dissolved as Ohio moved toward statehood in March 1803. He was considered

### WANTED.

**A**N Apprentice to the TANNING BUSINESS is wanted immediately by the Subscriber in Rossville. A boy between 16 and 18 years of age, of a good moral character, will find a good situation by applying soon. No one need apply except his character stands fair.

DAVID ANDERSON.  
Rossville, D c. 23, 1823.

the author of the Ohio Constitution, a requirement for statehood.

His public service included terms in the Ohio House of Representatives (1812-1813), a justice of the Ohio Supreme Court (1821-1828), and U. S. senator from Ohio (1828-1831).

In the senate, he replaced a life-long friend, William Henry Harrison, who resigned to accept an appointment as U. S. minister to Columbia.

In 1840, as a delegate to the Whig convention, Burnett helped Harrison secure that party's presidential nomination.

Burnet also served as president of Cincinnati College and the Ohio Medical College before his death May 10, 1853, in Cincinnati.

Burnett - who never resided in Rossville - is buried in Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati.

### James Smith

Smith came to the Northwest Territory from Pennsylvania in 1792. He had been born Dec. 22, 1763, in Cumberland County, Pa.

He became private secretary to Arthur St. Clair, governor of the territory.

Smith served as the first sheriff of Hamilton County (1796-1803), when it included the land which became Butler County in 1803.

In 1805, Smith moved to St. Clair Township in Butler County where he operated a sawmill with Arthur St. Clair Jr., son of the former territorial governor.

During the War of 1812, he helped organize an Ohio militia regiment and served under Gen. William Henry Harrison.

After the war, Smith farmed about 200 acres north of Rossville on Four Mile Creek. "He planted vineyards and orchards, raised crops and entered the New Orleans trade,"