

Capt. Riley, crossing of the St. Marys  
April 10th 1822

My dear Mother

Cherrina has about a week ago  
in good health & commenced my work 2 days  
after. The weather has been very rough since  
that time & of course my progress has not been  
very great. I find the country much better  
than I expected & have been treated with some  
hospitality & kindness by Capt. Riley & his  
family. Joseph Mc enjoys his health and  
is doing very well. I find that my district con-  
tains between 350 & 400 miles & will probably  
employ me with the best of your health  
I be best with health strength. I have come  
in to this place today for the purpose of  
receiving some provisions contracted for at  
Piqua & of course am much hurried. I will write  
you again the first opportunity.  
Your affectionate son  
James Worthington

Worthington wrote home, while surveying with Captain Riley.  
James Worthington, Captain Riley's Crossing of the St. Marys,  
to Mrs. Thomas Worthington, Chillicothe. April 10, 1822.  
[Ohio Historical Society Archives, Columbus, Ohio.]

January 26, 2017, Our Old Bookcase, First Surveyors Mercer Co, OH & Jay Co., IN

**Photo caption:** James Worthington visited Captain James Riley in 1822, at Willshire, Ohio. James Worthington, son of Ohio Governor Thomas Worthington, and Captain James Riley were both appointed by U.S. Surveyor General Edward Tiffin, as surveyors of land north of the 1795 Greenville Treaty Line, beginning in Mercer Co., OH and Jay Co., IN, in 1819 and early 1820's.

## **OUR OLD BOOK CASE**

*By Joyce L. Alig, President, Mercer County Historical Society*

This corner of Mercer & Van Wert Counties, Ohio adjacent to Jay and Adams Counties, Ohio, played a State and Federal role in the pioneer settlement of NW Ohio and NE Indiana. The highlights of the history of early families' settlement at Fort Recovery, and Willshire, Ohio with Jay and Adams County, Indiana illustrate what the settlements along the Ohio-Indiana State Line have in common.

Mary Simison married Peter Studabaker on February 15, 1821 at the Simison home at the site of the former military fort, Fort Recovery, (prior to the 1836 plat of the Village of Recovery in Recovery Township.) (Gibson Township was a part of Darke Co., until 1848, when Auglaize Co. was formed.)

Mary Simison Studabaker was born March 16, 1796 in Sherman Valley, PA. When she was two years old, her father John Simison moved to a site near Lexington, KY. Six years later they moved the Warren Co., OH; a few years later they moved to Greenville, and in the spring of 1817, moved to the site of Fort Recovery. Mary Simison Studabaker was 74 years of age, when she gave this interview, which is recorded in the "History of Jay County, IN," by M.W. Montgomery, at Chicago, 1864.

*“There was not a single family then living in all the region of the Upper Wabash River. They were the first pioneers of Fort Recovery. There was a trading house at Fort Recovery, built by David Conner. It was about twelve feet square and surrounded by pickets, as a protection against the Indians. Mary’s mother, Mrs. John Simison, died in September 1820, and John died December 31<sup>st</sup>. Following that, Mary Simison and Peter Studabaker were married. Peter engaged in farming for about twelve years, when they moved to Adams County, IN, where he died June 15, 1840. Mary and their son Abram continued to live in her log home in Adams County,”*

Mrs. Studabaker gave the following account of the survey of this part of Indiana by the U.S. Government surveyors: *“In the winter of 1821 and 1822 James Worthington, Columbus, Ohio, son of Governor Thomas Worthington, accompanied by nine assistants came to their home and stayed with them during the three months occupied in making the survey. Having two sets of instruments, they operated in two distinct companies, and surveyed the territory now making the counties of Jay, Adams and Wells. They gave Mr. Studabaker a plat of their survey, which was very useful to the early settlers for many years.”*

Captain James Riley was appointed as Deputy Surveyor, by Edward Tiffin, Surveyor General of the U.S., on June 23, 1819. Riley moved to Chillicothe, Ohio and began his survey at the source of the Wabash River, south of the fort, Fort Recovery, in November 1819. Riley went on to survey northwest Ohio, and the land of the old Military Fort Wayne, IN. Edward Tiffin also appointed his nephew James Worthington to survey in this new territory. Worthington worked with Riley, and stayed with Riley in his home at Willshire, at the crossing of the St. Marys River. Worthington wrote his mother about this, April 10, 1822. [See the above letter.] See Also, “Ohio’s Last Frontiersman, Captain James Riley.”

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