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JAMES MENEES,

was born in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania in the year 1741, his father, whose name was also James, having emigrated from Ireland to America, and settled in that county in 1738, the young man, then only 17 years of age, joined the Pennsylvania line, to defend the frontiers against the French and Indians: he remained two years in the army, but, not being immediately under Col. Washington, he was not at Braddock's defeat. The settlement in which he was brought up, being altogether Dutch, there was no English school in the neighborhood: his father was therefore under the necessity of boarding him out or teaching him at home. Laboring under the disadvantages of a new settler, the old gentleman taught his son James, together with his other children, to read and write. An Englishman who settled in the neighborhood, being pleased with the aspiring disposition of the young man, then nineteen years of age, volunteered to superintend his studies in arithmetic, gratuitously, which offer was, of course, thankfully accepted. Not having time to devote to study in the day, he walked four miles at night after splitting rails all day, and in four nights acquired such a knowledge of the first principles of Arithmetic, as enabled him afterwards, by his own application and industry to perfect himself in it. The manner in which he acquired a knowledge of surveying is equally remarkable. A person engaged in surveying stayed all night with him, and their conversation was on that subject; from this brief instruction, his unusual mathematical genius enabled him to catch the idea, so that having made himself a *wooden protractor*, using a two foot rule for a scale and a common compass for a divider, he commenced the practice of surveying; and with these rough instruments he acquired such a knowledge of the science as enabled him to instruct others in it.

In 1781 Mr Menees came to the *French Lick* (now Nashville) and commenced a school in the Fort, The following year he went to Virginia, passing through the uninhabited and pathless wilderness by a dimly marked track scarcely known to civilized man, and surrounded by ferocious savages who never failed to use the tomahawk and the scalping knife on all who came in their way. In the fall of '82 he removed his family from Virginia to French Lick, and in '83 again visited that State passing through the same dangerous wilderness and again escaped without injury. At this time he purchased for the benefit of the new settlers at French Lick fifty head of cattle, and at the imminent hazard of his life, drove them through the wilderness and succeeded in getting forty-eight head safe to Nashville. His success in this adventurous and perilous undertaking, gave him great standing among the Pioneers of this country.

Mr Menees has always borne the character of a very pious man, and the example of a person so highly esteemed had great influence on the minds of the new settlers. He devoted much of his time to the instruction of youth, but, when it was necessary, he was always among the foremost in defending the frontiers of this country against the tomahawk and the scalping knife of the savages. He was the builder of the first Court-House and Jail in Nashville, and by his industry and economy he acquired a large and independent fortune. Like the great Sir Isaac Newton, he acquired an extraordinary knowledge of Astronomy without the assistance of a teacher; and about twenty years ago lost his sight, which misfortune was supposed to have been occasioned by the straining of his eyes in contemplating the heavenly bodies, his blindness has no doubt occasioned the loss to the world of many useful observations, his great length of days and his devotion to the subject would have enabled him to make on the planetary system.

The wife of Mr Menees was an exemplary woman and was a victim to the epidemic of 1815. Mr M. then discontinued house-keeping and is now living with an attentive and dutiful son, who does all in his power to promote his happiness and render the evening of his days pleasant. Mr M. is now in the 92nd year of his age, and has the satisfaction of knowing that his children are enjoying the benefits derived from a philanthropic parent; his posterity has now reached the fourth generation and numbers nearly three hundred. Mr M. is about six feet two inches high; has generally weighed from 200 to 220 pounds, but is now reducing in weight. He walks well for a blind man, has a good countenance, a strong mind, and the appearance of a person not exceeding seventy five years of age.

James Menees

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