

THE SCHROCK CONESTOGA WAGON

In the year 1843, two Conestoga wagons arrived at what is now the square in Milan, Sullivan County, Missouri. The Perez Drue Schrock Family of approximately 16 members settled on the Sullivan County & Linn County line west of Big Locust Creek and north to Fields' Mill. Scottsville was at that time an established community.

Lots of timber and water

The two Conestoga wagons, when new, started out as freighting wagons from Springfield, Virginia, to Philadelphia. Now they were logging wagons, hauling timber to build new homes in a new part of the country. Dave Schrock housed one in a double log cabin. The cabin was struck by lightning and burned wagon No. 1.

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Wagon No. 2 was housed in Ida and Jack Hill's barn south of Humphreys, Sullivan Co., Paul Hill, son of Jack Hill, became caretaker of the wagon until the old farm was sold and Paul bought a smaller farm. The wagon was moved to a new home. Paul's health failed and the wagon was put up for sale.

Rosalie Schrock sent a buyer for the wagon -- and became the new and present owner.

It sailed under new canvas down Main Street of Browning Centennial Parade 1972.

THE CONESTOGA WAGON BOX

This wagon box was in the possession of Mary Rosalie (Schrock) Schrock (Mrs. H. E.), Browning, Linn County, Missouri, at the time of her death, January 22, 1994. She had purchased it October 23, 1971, at the Paul B. Hill Auction, Sullivan County, Missouri.

It is on loan to the Sullivan County Historical Society, Milan, Missouri, in honor of the first Sullivan County Schrock family and its many descendants. It was placed in the Milan Depot building June 19, 1994.

Paul B. Hill, whose family had preserved the wagon box for about 129 years, was a great grandson of the original owners, Perez D. Schrock and Nancy (Long) Schrock, his wife. Rosalie Schrock was a great granddaughter of the original owners.

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There are several published accounts of the family journey (1842-1843) from Hampshire County, West Virginia (it was Virginia at that time), to Sullivan County, Missouri (in 1843 Sullivan County was part of Linn County). Sixteen people and their belongings and two wagons made the long trip (the second wagon burned years ago). The accounts have come from family tradition carried down through the generations of descendants of several of the original family. (See references given below.)

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REFERENCES:

THE SCHROCK FAMILY.

Thomas S. Reed. 1980. Hardbound 2nd Edition. Printed by the Community Press, Chillicothe, Missouri.

THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF SULLIVAN COUNTY MISSOURI, VOL.I 1836-1900

Gladys Wells Crumpacker. Edited by Robert Wood Wilson. 1977. History Publications, Inc., Milan, Missouri. (See pages 297, 557 and 558)

THROUGH THE YEARS 1872-1972:

Browning, Missouri, Centennial Celebration. Committee. 1972. Published by Elizabeth Prather Ellsberry. (See Perez Drue Schrock)

The Missouri Ruralist. April 12, 1941, page 6.

CONESTOGA WAGON 1750-1850: Freight Carriers for 100 Years of America's Westward Expansion. Third Edition.

George Shumway and Howard C. Frey. 1968. George Shumway, Publisher (R.D. 7, York, PA 17402) Printed by Trimmer Printing Inc., York, PA 1968.

All of these references are available in the Sullivan County Historical Society Library in the museum building.

Perez and Nancy Schrock are buried in the Schrock Cemetery, as are several of their descendants. Others of the first family are buried in Hoover Cemetery, and Jenkins and Wesley Chapel Cemeteries in Linn County.

The Conestoga wagon box now on display in the Milan Depot, Milan, Missouri, is an eight-bow wagon (two of the seven bows present are not original; they were acquired by Mrs. Schrock after the wagon was in her possession). Two original chains are in place. Traces of the original blue paint remain on the side panels. The running gear has not survived; it was likely used for other purposes after the arrival in Sullivan County. The inside measurements at the floor are 12 feet by 40 inches. The overall length on the outside at the top (including the rake of the rear gate and front panel and their bows) is approximately 17 feet. It has been said, and it appears so, that this box could be disassembled. The tool box, with decorative iron work, is on the left side of the wagon box between the middle two standards (bows placed at these points).

The Conestoga wagon (not to be confused with the prairie schooner) was designed to accommodate freight being hauled over rough roads and mountains. The load could not shift to either end enough to disturb the balance of the weight.

The wagonmaster walked beside the team or rode one of the horses; he did not ride in the wagon. It is doubtful that anyone rode in the wagon. Those accompanying it walked, unless,

it is assumed, one was very young, or sick or injured. - 5 -

Marilie (Schrock) Weber (Mrs. Gene) and Saralou (Schrock) Andereck (Mrs. Paul), daughters of Rosalie Schrock, donated the Conestoga wagon to The Sullivan County Historical Society.

The summary of the history of the wagon was written June 20, 1994, by Saralou Andereck, RR 1, Box 18B, Browning, Missouri.

The wagon box was delivered to the Depot Museum in Milan on Saturday, June 18, 1994. The following people helped make it possible: Paul Andereck, Stanley Schrock, Jim Schrock, Jerry Smith and Julie and Danny Maggart, Browning; Mike Downing, Lloyd Nichols and others, Milan.