

James H. Blue (continued)

Wild and savage animals were often seen in the surrounding woods, and deer occasionally came into the clearing to steal the roasting ears. There was plenty to do for all members of the family. There was at all times the big trees to fell, heap and burn, the brush to get rid of, the stumps to dig out or burn out, the crops to sow and reap among the stumps and brush which came up again and again to annoy the settler.

The boys were not permitted to become lonesome for want of work. And when they did occasionally have a frolic, such as a shooting contest, or a husking match, or a hunt of the neighborhood,--one of a circular sort, where a great many men would surround a large section of the forest and then slowly approach a common center, shooting all the animals that tried to break through the line,--they did not fail to enjoy themselves, as well as some of the youths of the present day do. The old settlers declare to a man that they had better times than do the youth of today. From the sportsman's standpoint they certainly did, but perhaps not from the standpoint of the dress party.

Ere long the family moved into a better and more commodious cabin than the old Indian hut. Every house was a log cabin in those days, and when a settler got able to build a double hewed-log house he was regarded as having made a marvelous advance. It was customary for the settlers, whenever a new one appeared, to gather in from many miles around and assist him in raising his log cabin. All the men would start in, cut down the trees of about the proper size, cut them into suitable lengths, roll or haul them with oxen to the site of the proposed structure, where ax-men would notch them, whip off the bark and another gang would then hoist them to their places on the walls. Subject's father, and even himself, often participated in these 'raisings'. The father became familiar with all the best tracts of land in this vicinity by showing new settlers the desirable tracts as they came on for purposes of investigation.

To Benjamin and wife the following children were born: Two that died in infancy; William, who married Miss Temperance Meredith; Sarrah, who wedded John VanTreese; Peter, who married Miss Minerva Millburn, and has been married once since; James H.

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James H. Blue was educated in the old log schoolhouse, with its greased paper windows and its puncheon floor. He applied himself diligently to his studies and was educated better than the average boy of that period. He remained hard at work on his father's farm until he attained his majority. In October, 1852, he went to Ohio where he found employment on a farm in tilling the soil, chopping wood and splitting rails. While thus engaged he became acquainted with Miss Phoebe, daughter of Elijah and Nancy Bloomer, and on July 19, 1855, they were married. The following January they came to this county and rented land of his father, and a little later bought eighty acres. This was in the woods, but he went to work to clear off the timber, and kept adding to his farm until at one time he owned three hundred and twenty acres. To himself and wife ten children were born: Elijah A., born May 26, 1856; John, born July 14, 1858; Charles, born September 13, 1860; Margaret, born January 20, 1863; William J., born October 15, 1864; Benjamin F., born October 15, 1866; Marion E., born in November, 1868, and died January 30, 1877.

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James H. Blue, like his father, is a member of the Democratic party. The father served this county in the state legislature about the year 1851 and was a man of unusual natural ability. The son has all of the father's good and strong qualities. He has served as supervisor and in other ways has made himself useful to the people of this vicinity. His name is above reproach and his life is blameless. He is one of the leaders of this portion of the county in all matters that tend to the upbuilding of the community. The county has no better farmer nor representative citizen."

*Taken from THE PROGRESSIVE MEN AND WOMEN OF KOSCIUSKO COUNTY.