

## Jesse Ruddick

May 4, 1794-May 23, 1870



Jesse Ruddick, was born May 4, 1784, Chestnut Creek, Grayson County, Virginia, the son of Solomon and Ann (Bedsaul) Ruddick. His mother infamously left her husband and large family, and ran away (to Canada) with another man, William A. Spurgeon.

As a boy of 15, Jesse moved with his father and step-mother to the Ohio Territory. In about February of 1803, he married Catherine Baker, (born October 11, 1782 Randolph County, North Carolina). She was the daughter of Umphria and Mary Baker. Soon after they were married, the couple settled on a 159-acre piece of land in Harrison Township, Ross County. This area became a part of Jackson County (Ohio) in 1818, but is now included in Vinton County. After others moved away to Kentucky, Jesse, his sister Mary, and their families were the only members of the Ruddick family to remain in Ohio.

According to the local newspaper, "Scioto Gazette and Chillicothe Advertiser"; Jesse Ruddick was mentioned in the June 5, 1809 issue as having found a stray mare. On June 27, 1810, he was mentioned again for finding a horse. In the War of 1812, Jesse enlisted as a private in Captain Josiah Kilbourn's Company (Third Regiment Ferguson's Ohio Militia), serving from July 28 to August 20, 1813. After six days leave, he transferred to Captain Caleb Odle's Company and served until November 12.

Jesse was mentioned again in the newspaper of July 20, 1815, when he appraised a mare found by Philip Argebright. He finally acquired a deed to his property on September 17, 1815, and received title to additional land on June 29, 1816. Jesse appeared on the tax list of Harrison township in 1817 and 1818, but by the Autumn of 1819 he had disposed of his Ohio farms.

Late in the year 1819, the Ruddick family traveled west to Delaware County, Indiana. Settlement was made in the area known as Haw Patch, named for the abundance of that fruit growing in the neighborhood. This was just northwest of present-day Columbus and about 20 miles from Jesse's father and brothers in Jackson County. This region became part of the newly formed Bartholomew County and on February 15, 1821, Jesse, his cousin William, and Solomon Stout became the first County Commissioners.

Jesse Ruddick became a Justice of the Peace in 1824 and also served as Inspector of Elections. He and his wife Catherine had not been members of the Society of Friends for many years and had become members of the Methodist faith. At a very early day, they helped organize the First Methodist Church at Haw Patch. They built a meetinghouse in the Fall of 1822, long known as the Liberty Meetinghouse and School. In 1828, the county government was planning the erection of a courthouse. Money being scarce at this time, Jesse Ruddick helped finance a major portion of the project.

Continuing actively in politics, Jesse was a member of the Indiana State Assembly, serving in the House of Representatives 1831 through 1833. He was a Whig and later Republican. Jesse raised racehorses and started a racetrack on Franklin Street in Columbus, where he drew up laws to govern a jockey club in 1833. There was a \$5.00 entry fee into the track, non-refundable "except (if) the nag dies or some of his bones is broken." Jesse's own prize steed, "American Buck," was a blood bay mare. He also traveled early to Iowa, where he made several business ventures. In 1834, Jesse donated land for the local school.

Jesse and Catherine Ruddick were divorced March 28, 1842. The divorce proceedings allege his infidelities with three other women (all widows!). On April 6, 1842, he married Malinda (Robertson) Sullivan (born about 1810, Kentucky), a young widow with children. Catherine went to live with her daughter Amy, and later with daughter Nancy. She died near Columbus on Dec. 19, 1868, at the age of 86, and was buried at Liberty Cemetery, the site of the meetinghouse they had been instrumental in establishing.

Jesse died on his farm in Wayne Township on May 23, 1870, at the age of 86. The Ruddick-Sullivan graves still lie in deep woods, but the area was subdivided in 1995 into ten-acre residential lots. The burial site lies on the east end of Lot 1 of Rustwood Minor Subdivision.

Findagrave links:

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