

## **CAPTAIN JOHN LUCAS**

John Lucas was born near Shepherdstown, Berkeley County, Virginia, on June 6, 1787. His parents, William and Susannah Barnes Lucas, were well-known and prominent land owners in Virginia. William had served with distinction in the Revolutionary War.

John's early years were spent in Virginia, where he received an excellent education, as his parents were able to afford the best teachers for him & his siblings.

After the Treaty of Greenville was signed in 1795, the Northwest Territory was opened for settlement. Two of John's older brothers, Joseph & William Lucas, came to what is now Scioto County, Ohio in 1796, settling on land west of Lucasville, in what is now Rush Township. They spoke so highly of the area, with its rich farmlands and timber, that William Lucas Sr. decided he wanted to bring the family to the Ohio country as well.

In 1802, William & Susannah Lucas obtained a letter of good standing from the Presbyterian Church in Shepherdstown, and they packed up for a move to the wilds of the Northwest Territory. The group included John's older married sisters, Susannah, and her husband, Robert Buckles; and Rebecca and her husband, Samuel Reed; his older brother, Samuel, and his wife Sarah; and an unmarried older brother, Robert, and younger unmarried sisters, Lavis and Abigail. These Lucases were in the area before Ohio became a state, in 1803.

William Lucas Sr. quickly established the family in the growing Ohio valley. He built a fine, brick house, which can be seen on early road surveys.

In the spring of 1812, Governor Meigs issued a call for volunteers to go into the frontier wilderness and fight the native Indians, who had been backed by England. This became known as the War of 1812. The English were still bitter that the colonies had broken away, declaring their independence. The British hoped the young country would fail. So when the call for volunteers came, David Rupe and John Lucas responded by forming two companies commanded by them. Many from Scioto County served with distinction; some did not survive. But the three Lucas brothers, Robert, Samuel, and John, had better luck and survived the war.

Susannah Lucas died in 1809, becoming the oldest marked grave in Lucasville Cemetery. William Lucas Sr. survived until 1814. At the time of his death, John Lucas was 27 years old ... and he decided it was time to start a family of his own.

John had maintained a long-distance courtship with his cousin, Mary Lucas, daughter of Robert and Sarah Rion Lucas, who still resided in Shepherdstown, Virginia. They corresponded regularly, and in 1815 John made a trip east to request Mary's hand in marriage. Her father agreed, and they were married there at her parent's plantation. Shortly thereafter, the couple returned to Ohio.

John inherited many hundred acres of land from his father. And he saw the need for a town in

central Scioto County. On August 7, 1819, John Lucas laid out the town of Lucasville. Among the lots and out-lots in the original plat, lot 10, was set aside for a cemetery & never to be used for any other purpose. On that area, his family had established its family cemetery, which grew to include burials of other pioneers of the area.

Mary and John were blessed with six children, four of whom grew to adulthood. Captain John Lucas contracted cholera & died on July 31, 1825. He was 38 years old.

John's widow, Mary, packed up the children and made the long trip back to Shepherdstown even though she was pregnant with her last child who was born after they arrived. Her brother, "Col. Bob" Lucas, had driven a team of horses to Ohio to bring his sister & her children back to Virginia. This could have been due in part to the wishes of Mary's father, Robert Lucas Sr. In his will, he stated "if my daughter Mary Lucas prefers to come to this state from the state of Ohio with her three children, that my executors have them well educated from the proceeds of my estate." For you see, even in 1825, Ohio was still a frontier, and life was perceived to be more refined back in Virginia.

While at Rion Hall, John Lucas's widow, Mary, became ill and died on November 23, 1826. She was only 33. The Lucas children were raised by Mary's mother and brother, and they remained in Shepherdstown. In 1849, John & Mary's son, John William Lucas, became a legal adult. He returned to Ohio to settle the last of his father's estate & sell off the lots of Lucasville that remained in the family's name.

Thus, the man who founded Lucasville had no descendants who stayed here. Over time, his wife & children became lost to history, until Rosemary Crabtree rediscovered them through her research at the Scioto County Court House. Many other Lucas family descendants do reside in the area, including those of John's older brother, Joseph Lucas, and his sisters Rebecca Lucas Reed and Abigail Lucas Clark Cramer.

