

JESSE EVANS, IRONMASTER

Jesse Evans, manager of Martha Furnace was born in Old Evesham Township in 1770, probably in the Lumberton area. He was not in the state to register for the 1793 militia. In 1795, at the age of 25 he married Lucy Ann, daughter of Samuel and Lucy Kellum of Beverly, Mass. Lucy Ann was born in 1769. The couple were probably married in Philadelphia where Lucy lived after her parents died. We are certain they were not married in Friends Meeting.

The first public mention of Evans appears in an ad placed in the New Jersey Mirror for 1799 offering for sale at Lumberton the new iron plow recently developed by Charles Newbold. From this date Evans' activities are traceable through newspapers, tax duplicates, census records and, for the years 1808 to 1815, the pages of the Martha diary.

GAZETTE OF THE UNITED STATES and PHILADELPHIA ADVERTISER (Phila, Pa.) THURS., FEB. 7, 1799

Patent Ploughs,

To be sold for cash by Joseph Salter at Atfion Richard Wells, Cooper's Ferry—Jonathan Harker, Woodbury—and Jesse Evans, Lumberton. Those who have used them give them the preference to any other kind, as they require less team, break the ground better. are kept in order at less expence and are sold at a cheaper rate—the plan is much simplified and consists of but one piece of cast iron, with the handles and beam of wood; they may be fixed with wrought lays and coulters to be put on with screws and taken off at pleasure

Patent rights for vending with instructions for making them may be had by applying to John Newbold, or the subscriber No. 212 North Front-street.

Who has for Sale;
Or to Lease for a term of Years,

A number of valuable tracts of Land, well situated for Mills, Iron Works or Farms, mostly improved, lying chiefly in the county of Huntingdon state of Pennsylvania. Those who may incline to view them will please to apply to John Canan esq. near Huntingdon.

Charles Newbold.

July 17 2awtf

In 1802 the Evanses moved to Little Egg Harbor Township where Jesse is listed as householder and merchant. That fall, the new Township of Washington was formed from parts of Little Egg Harbor, Northampton and Evesham. The organization meeting was held on the second Tuesday in March, 1803, at Bodines Tavern. Evans undoubtedly attended that meeting for he was elected to the Township Committee and to the Board of Freeholders.

The diary mentions Mr. Evans frequently. He rides to Tuckerton, he goes to Burlington and Mount Holly. Several times he is reported "going into the country," Today, with no habitation within miles of Martha the statement seems amusing. He occasionally attends Friends Meeting with his wife. The two go to the beach. When alone, we assume, he rides horse-back but nowhere in the diary is a saddle horse mentioned. From tax records we know he owns a "riding chair," probably a two wheeled affair. When he takes his mother to Pottsgrove, Penna., he undoubtedly used a four-wheeled vehicle. Most trips are on business, some to court at Bodines or French's Bass River, where court was sometimes held. A law suit before Caleb Cramer, Esq., occupies his day on June 15, 1812.

But Evans' activities are not confined to travel. He seems to let the actual supervision of the furnace to his second-in-command, the Irishman, Mick, Jr. Evans supervised a new road from the works to a place called Iron Landing. He goes on surveying trips with his surveyor, William Sharp. He helps to build the school house and later is reported making a school desk. In January, 1809, he salts down pork for the

house.

Evans spends considerable time hunting for new sources of ore. Usually Samuel Taggart accompanies him. Yet with all his reported activities we fail to learn what sort of a man he is. Dare we question his ethics? The thought occurs in an item of November 24, 1813: "Thomas Taylor and Mr. Evans had a high time respecting some ore that Tommy says was raised on his land." There is an implication that someone from Martha took ore from Taylor's property. "High time" implies heated words between the two men. As no later reference is made to the incident, we assume the matter was amicably settled.

The diary tells us much, yet not enough to satisfy us. The diarist is mute about personal happenings at the ironmaster's house. We must search other records. For instance; why no mention is made of the death of John King, a friend of Evans, is a mystery. King was a carter at Martha and owner and operator of the Half Moon Tavern at Flyatt. King died on March 25, 1813. He left eight children under 14 and three over that age. Evans and Joseph Doron were court-appointed guardians. Jesse and Lucy Ann took into their home the four youngest children, John, less than a year old, Lucy about 2, Margaret 4, and Mary 5. One of these children would figure prominently in the later years of Jesse Evans.

The diary mentions no children of Jesse and Lucy Ann. There is a strong possibility that one Jesse Evans, Jr., who married Ann Camp in 1818, may have been their son. The Camden Mail, Camden, N. J., published the following under date October 7, 1835:

"Evans, Jesse, Jr., late of Mount Holly. Died on the 2nd inst., at Joseph Burr's Ferry, aged 25 years. Another notice in the same newspaper dated October 28, simply states that he died in Philadelphia.

LUCY ANN EVANS, nee KELLUM.

Charles S. Boyer and Arthur D. Pierce stress that the Evanses were members of the Society of Friends. Both quote Leah Blackman's account that when the separation took place that Lucy Ann affiliated herself with the Hicksite Meeting at Bridgeport. So faithful was she that when the members moved away she continued to attend as the only member of the meeting. It makes a romantic and probably true story. Few know the story of Lucy Ann's earlier life and how, she wrestled with her conscience for years before she finally "saw the light" and became a Quaker.

Lucy Ann had a problem. She was a nicotine addict. We learn this from a "Memorial Concerning Lucy Ann Evans, deceased," read and approved by Mount Holly Monthly Meeting of Friends, held at Mount Holly, New Jersey, Third month 10th, 1881. The memorial is signed by Benjamin R. Lamb and Priscilla H. Clothier, Clerks.

Lucy Ann was not a member of the Society when she and her husband moved to Martha. We quote from the memorial: "Prior to becoming a Friend, she was on the gay walks of life. She had long indulged in the habit of using snuff, but about the forty-fifth year of her age, she felt it a duty required of her to abandon the practice." The lady must have been strong-willed for she was able to kick the habit. In modern vernacular she applied the cold turkey method to her problem. She confined herself to her room for some weeks and was able to overcome "the pernicious habit." Only after being completely cured did she feel "that it would be right to join in membership with the Religious Society of Friends." Lucy Ann joined the society about the year, 1814.

Whether Jesse was a member of the Friends has not been determined. We think it unlikely. During the diary years he often attended meeting with his wife. But the oft told story of his wife seated alone in the Bridgeport Meeting leads us to believe that Jesse was not a regular member. Later evidence bears this out. In the fall of 1834, Lucy Ann Evans, nee Kellum, died at the age of 66. Her gravestone may be found on a hill near the Wading River at Bridgeport.



Gravestone of first Lucy Ann Evans

THE SECOND LUCY ANN

In December, 1836, two years after his wife died, Evans married for the second time. The fact that he was married at the age of 66 is not the point. That his second wife bore the same first name as his first baffled the editors. As a coincidence it seemed improbable but could not be ignored. For weeks we questioned a known will of one Jesse Evans, Gent, of Medford. This will, dated 1849, mentioned "his beloved wife 'Lucy Ann Evans' and five children! Not until we found the following announcement in a Trenton newspaper, '**Emporium and True American**,' under date January 7, 1837, did we conclude that Jesse Evans of Martha and Medford, were one and the same:

"On the 26 ult., at Martha Furnace by the Rev. B. Twilford, Jesse Evans, Esq., to Lucy Ann King, both of the above place."

As the newspaper notice states, the marriage took place at Martha Furnace. Evans had been married to his former ward, Lucy Ann King. She was then 25 years old. The newly married couple continued to live in the ironmaster's house. In the late fall their first child, named Elizabeth, was born, followed by Lucy Ann in 1839, Jesse in 1841, Rebecca in 1842 and David in 1845. We get these dates from the census records of 1850.

Martha Furnace continued to operate at least until 1841. This was the year that Samuel Richards conveyed the furnace tract to Evans. Soon after, the competition from hard-coal furnaces in Pennsylvania closed the iron works forever. Evans then switched to making charcoal which was manufactured at Martha for a number of years.

The Evans' probably moved from Martha to Medford Township around 1847, as this was the last year his name appears as a Washington Township committeeman. The location of his new home is not known. In 1849 Medford Township included the village of Lumberton. We assume his house was near Lumberton where, as a youth, he may have lived. To date we have not found the graves of Evans or the second Lucy Ann.

HIS DEATH AND WILL

The record of Jesse Evans' death, found in the New Jersey Bureau of Archives and History gives the following: Place of death, Medford, New Jersey, date 29 3 mo 1849. Sex male. Married. Age 79. Occ., Gentleman. Born Evesham.

Evans signed his will on March 13, 1849. His signature is legible and firm. It was the second item in the will that caused the editors' confusion. It reads as follows:

“Item, I give and bequeath unto my beloved wife Lucy Ann Evans in addition to her right of dower at common law, the rents issuing and profit of all my Dwelling House and lands in Medford to hold to her so long as she remains my widow and no longer.” Following are listed the names of the five children who are provided for through the sale of his property. No mention is made in the will of Martha Furnace, his home for 40 years.