

# BENJAMIN BLISH

## Ohio Offered A Better Life

Benjamin Blish was born February 11, 1753 in Bolton, Tolland County, Connecticut to Benjamin and Mary Adams Blish. Benjamin is thought to have enlisted as a private on June 13, 1776 in Captain Micah Hamlen's Company, Colonel Thomas Marshall's Regiment. He continued to serve under different commands throughout the Revolutionary War. His final tour of service was with Captain Israel Hicks, Colonel Thomas Carpenter's Regiment in August 1780.

Benjamin married Phebe Skinner in 1774. She was the sister of Captain Abraham Skinner, another early settler of the Western Reserve. Benjamin and Phebe had nine children. In 1780, Benjamin settled his family in Middlefield, Hampshire County, Massachusetts. A prominent farmer, local town records show Benjamin was appointed to and served on the Middlefield School Committee, which was responsible for the founding of the first public school in Middlefield, Massachusetts.



he found the roads to be in poor condition the further they traveled. Upon leaving Buffalo, they had great difficulty obtaining food for themselves and their horses.

Benjamin and his family reached Erie, Pennsylvania on July 16, 1805. At that time, their horses were unfit to travel any further. With only a pocketknife to defend themselves, his sons proceeded alone with the horses and two dogs, reaching Captain Skinner's home on the Grand River by July 20, 1805. Meanwhile, Benjamin struck a deal with a man named Ross to convey the rest of the family and their belongings to Grandon (now Fairport Harbor) by flat-bottom boat, in exchange for one wagon. They worked their way along the shoreline as weather permitted, and would haul their boat ashore during adverse conditions. After several narrow escapes they landed at Grandon, Skinner's Landing on July 30, 1805. Initially, Benjamin and his family stayed in one room of a log house with Esquire Merry until their own home was completed in December 1805. Their home was located on land known as the Blish Farm on the south side of Mentor Avenue in what is now Painesville Township, Ohio. Benjamin and his family lived on the Blish Farm for many years. It was known that he was pleased to have placed his children in a more desirable location to prosper than the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts.

Benjamin and his wife lived out their lives on the Blish Farm. Documents dated June 17, 1810 indicate they were among the founding members of the First Congregational Church of Painesville, Ohio. A bronze plaque inscribed with the names of the charter members can be found in the sanctuary of the church. Benjamin died on March 11, 1825 and is interred in the Old Mentor Avenue (also known as Blish or Nye) Cemetery. At the time of his death, he was said to have been "a universally beloved man of the highest integrity and purity of character". The New Connecticut Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) have honored Benjamin with an inscribed brick located at the America 250 Patriots Marker at the Lake County Courthouse in Painesville, Ohio.

