

ATTACHMENT 'B'

Sometime ago you asked for information concerning Great-grandfather, George Foster, and the famous 'Deep Snow' of 1830-31. The notes which I have on that matter are compiled from fairly reliable sources, some written and some verbal, as statements made by Cousin, Doug Foster, at Chatham. They sum up as follows:

'In the winter of 1830-31, came the famous 'Deep Snow' which was an accumulation of several snowfalls followed by a snowstorm of unusual severity. When this by thawing or possibly from sleet and rain followed by freezing became crusted over, men and dogs could walk upon its surface, due to his small sharp hoofs, a deer could not run over the surface, but continually broke through and so was easily caught. Game of all sorts suffered severely and died in great numbers. Deer, prairie chickens, etc., never became plentiful again.

Many of the settlers in Sangamon County, Illinois were lost in the snow storm itself or fell through the crust. Several thus lost their lives and their bodies were found in the following spring after the snow had melted.

On the day the last big snow of the series began, George Foster, our great-grandfather, went deer hunting, taking with him his two eldest sons, William and Peyton (Our Uncles). The Storm began before any success had attended the efforts of the hunters. Thinking the weather likely to prove to be too bad for boys of 7 or 8 years of age, George sent his sons home, which undoubtedly saved their lives. It was the last they saw of him for many days.

The storm grew worse and worse as Grandfather George continued with his hunting until at last it dawned upon him that he was lost. Fortunately he had his dog with him. This animal was a great comfort to him during the trying time which followed and eventually helped to save his master's life. Four or five nights later, Mr. Wilcox, a neighbor several miles from George's home heard a weird sound or outcry in the middle of the night. While considering what to do and waiting for it to be repeated, he heard a scratching at the door. Opening his cabin door, he found there the faithful dog which led him out into the night through two or three hundred yards of the unbelievably deep snow to a man more dead than alive. Mr. Wilcox managed to get Grandfather inside and by patient and careful labor, saved his life. A week or so later he took him home. Imagine the joy in the Foster cabin when the scratching and whining of the dog caused them to open the door and they beheld coming across the snow, the loved one whom they had given up for dead.

'George Foster's life had been saved. He was to live more than six years longer but the man who had once been acknowledged as the strongest man in Sangamon County was never fully restored to health.

To emphasize the dangers which he had escaped or survived, I repeat the undoubtedly true statement that the snow was so deep that stumps of trees cut for fuel during the winter of 1830-31 stood 8 and 10 feet above the ground after the snow had melted away in the following spring.