

ROSEVILLE LEGEND

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An Early Roseville Letter

By James L. Murphy

Correspondence of any sort— business or personal— appears to have rarely been preserved from the early history of Roseville, so that the following brief letter, written only five years after the town was incorporated, is of more interest than it might appear on first reading. The letter is a stamp-less cover addressed to Mr. S. W. Goff, Roseville:

Zanesville — 29 Nov 1845

Sir

Wheat is \$1.00 here now, but I don't think it safe to hold it—as soon as I can see **Beaumont** I think it will be best to sell but I think I can get 106 when I see him—I should advise you to send it in as fast as you can—I should like you to try **Jas Harris** for a week or two. **Stecker** & he don't agree, he wants some one older over him. I should not wish you to keep him a day longer than you like. There are some excellent qualities in all that family, particularly integrity that is not always to be met with.

Since writing above we received yours but **McLain** says it is too slippery to take out the goods, besides which there is not time this morning to get them ready. I have likewise seen **Beaumont** but he will not offer over 100, you had better send the wheat in here as fast as you can, & we will see who will give the most for it.

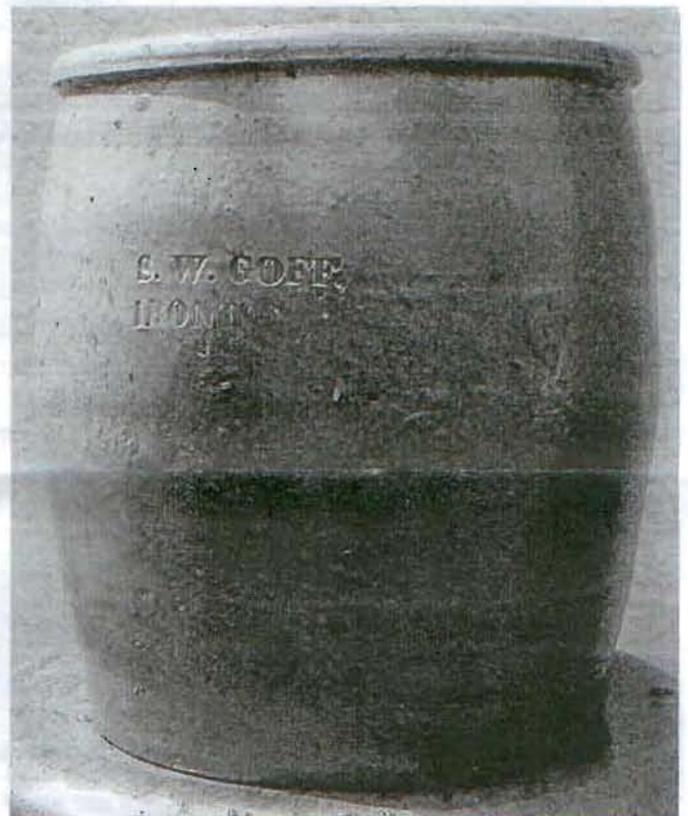
Clover seems worth 4 to 3.25—but it is not ready yet, they are only enquiring about it before it is thrashed.

Yrs truly,

Jn R. Prat

John Richard Prat [spelled with only one "t"] was born in Kent, England, in 1787. He married **Rebecca Rosetta Benton** in 1817 in Essex, and migrated to New Jersey in 1832. By 1841, the family was living in Zanesville, where daughter **Rosetta** married **Samuel W. Goff**, July 26, 1841. **Prat** was a man of some substance and in 1843 purchased the **West Zanesville** flour mills owned by **Michael Dulty** for \$7,000. In 1850 he is listed as owning \$25,000 in real estate, including a block of store rooms on Main Street, between First and Second.

By this time, however, his son-in-law was no longer interested in wheat and clover. He and his wife and young family had moved to Marietta, Ohio, where he was a stoneware potter. He was still potting in Marietta in late 1852, when **Joshua Hambleton**, an early Burlington, Ohio, potter wrote him a friendly letter inquiring how



A rare small canner impressed S.W. Goff/Ironton, O. Goff lived in Roseville in 1845. [Photo courtesy of James L. Murphy.]

the potting goes. **Hambleton's** letter makes it clear that **Goff** had lived for a time in Burlington, but the dates are uncertain. By 1860, **Goff** had moved to nearby Ironton where he operated a stoneware pottery at the corner of Seventh and Lawrence Streets for some years, before selling out and turning to selling shoes (shoe merchant). The pottery continued under various managements as late as 1890. **Goff** died on Thanksgiving Day, 1894, his widow **Rosetta** surviving until 1906.

It is interesting to think that **Goff** learned the potting trade in Roseville, though it is possible that he learned it when he lived in Burlington. The **Jas. Harris** mentioned in **Prat's** letter remains unidentified, but it is also intriguing to note that after **Goff** sold his Ironton pottery it was operated by **William P. Harris** and his brother **John M. Harris**, both of whom came from Muskingum County. Although several marked pieces of **Harris** stoneware are known, the only example of **Goff's** work is a small canner impressed "S.W. Goff/Ironton, O."