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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



CENTENNIAL RECORD,

HISTORICAL SKETCH

—OF—
Hardin County, State of Illinois,
From the Earliest Settlement to the present Time.

JULY 4, A. D. 1876.

HISTORICAL RECORD.

Hardin County from its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time.
1805 to 1876.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

We purpose in the following lines a brief sketch of the history of Hardin County from the earliest times to the present day, commencing at a period of time when the territory of what is now Hardin County, was in common with all the tract of country known as the Northwest territory; one vast wilderness filled with game and wild beasts that roamed the vast uncultivated prairies unmolested by night or day, save by the wandering red man who depended largely upon their flesh for food and their skins for clothing. Civilization was an utter stranger to our hills and plains, and with the possible exception of a few roving and adventurous Spaniards or Frenchmen, no white man had ever seen the interior of what is now the great State of Illinois. A hundred years ago no legislative assembly had ever sat in council in this State for the purpose of enacting laws or making appropriations; the clamors of a political convention had never echoed along our shores, nor had

the wild buffalo of the prairie ever caught the shrill whistle of the locomotive; no school houses, church houses, seats of justice or government had reared their lofty fronts to Heaven, nor were there any cities or towns to mar the wild chaotic grandeur of the forest and the plain, but universal savageness in all its primitive perfection and sombre monotony reigned supreme throughout the length and breadth of what is now our peerless State.

EARLY SETTLEMENTS.

Prior to the year 1805 some settlements had been made in different portions of what is now the State of Illinois, but it was not until this period that settlements began along the bank of the Ohio.

EARLY SETTLERS.

The early settlers were a bold hardy race of people long remembered for their simplicity, hospitality and endurance. Their pioneer hearths were the scenes of genuine conviviality and good humor, and many were the tales they told and the songs they sung of the wild adventures of their day and generation; of their journeys through trackless forests, their encounters with savage foes and their legends of our glorious revolution, then fresh in the minds of all.

SETTLEMENT OF HARDIN COUNTY.

As we have said, settlements began in what is now Hardin County, along the bank of the Ohio in 1805, extending from what was then

known as the Sturtevant farm where Alfred Wood now resides, down the river to Parkinsons Landing. Most of these settlers were from North Carolina; prominent among them were Samuel Omelvany and Alexander Blair and their families. Omelvany was the first Justice of the Peace in the new settlement and Blair was the first Constable. Mr Omelvany represented the district in the territorial legislature and was a member of that body when the first Constitution of the State was formed and adopted. The settlement was considerably augmented in the years between 1810 and 1820, by emigrants from South Carolina, New York and the New England States; prominent among the newcomers were James Steele, Thomas Cowsert, Alexander Parkinson, Jeduthum Dimick and Zebulon Halleck; the latter a relative of the celebrated American Poet of that name—Fitz Greene Halleck. The early settlers were almost universally engaged in agriculture; the farms were necessarily small,—being cleared up in winter to be plowed in summer. The implements of the farmer were rude and scanty; plows were made with wooden mole boards and pitchforks of small forked saplings cut, peeled and dressed for the purpose. The grain was cut with reaping hooks, or sickles; the rifle, the fishing net and the trap were the necessary and common property of the farmers, for the forest abounded in game, and the streams were filled with fish; the country was heavily timbered with oak, poplar, walnut, ash and maple; sugar made from the latter soon became an article of use and commerce.

PRIMITIVE MILLS.

In 1814 Aaron Neal erected a water grist mill on big creek on the place now owned and occupied by Richard Hetherington. In 1819 this mill was bought by Moses Twitchell, by whom it was enlarged by the addition of a saw mill and distillery. It long continued to be the only mill in the surrounding country.

EARLY SETTLERS OF MONROE PRECINCT.

That part of the County now embraced in Monroe precinct, was settled about or perhaps a little later than that embraced in Rose Clare precinct, of which we have written. As late as 1812 the county was infested by savages, and during that year a man by the name of James

Jourdan, was wounded by them in defense of a block house situated near the north boundary of the county. The early settlers in that portion of the county were mainly from Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia; among them were Daniel Vinyard, Henry Rose, Ezekiel McCoy and Myers Singleton.

SETTLEMENT OF THE CURTAIL.

That portion of the county known as the curtail began to be settled in 1811. Hugh McConnell came from Ireland to America and settled on the Ohio river. About this time came also John Brown from Pennsylvania, and settled in the same neighborhood.

FLYNN'S FERRY.

In 1816, Flynn's ferry on the Ohio river was established, and a road from thence to Kaskaskia was the earliest state road in Illinois. John Shearer was also an early settler in these parts, and taught the first school ever taught in that portion of the country.

SETTLEMENT OF McFARLAN PRECINCT IN THE YEAR 1810.

Settlements were made in McFarlan precinct as early as the year 1810, and prominent among the early settlers were the McFarlans, the Scotts, the Pankeys and the Jacksons; the descendants of some of these have held divers official positions in the county from its earliest organization, and many of them are still living.

EARLY FERRY AT ELIZABETHTOWN

A Ferry was early established near where Elizabethtown now stands, which was for many years in constant use, and of great prominence as a crossing point for travelers; and the salt works at Equality having begun operations as early as 1812, the salt was hauled thence in wagons by this ferry, and sent thither on wagons to various points in Kentucky and Tennessee.

EARLY CHURCHES AND MINISTERS

Among the early churches erected by settlers was a Methodist church at the McMurphy place and a Baptist church at Peters cave spring, near where Isaac Martin now lives. The regular Baptist organized a church as early as 1806; Richard Lee was its founder. Among the early preachers of the gospel were Rondo Stilley and Barker. Philo Averille a Methodist preacher was the founder of the first Methodist church in the new settlements, and *rode the entire circuit on foot.*

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES.

At the period of which we now write the facilities for education as well as all other auxiliaries of civilization were very poor and the only schools were an occasional subscription school, undertaken by some traveler or new comer in the newly settled district, for the space usually of three months. The old and the young frequently attended school together and there devoted their energies to the doubtful task of solving the obscure problems of the old United States spelling book.

RELIGIOUS ENTERPRISE.

Notwithstanding the few opportunities afforded, a large proportion of the inhabitants were religiously inclined, and often gathered themselves together in a house built of round logs and there seated upon benches made of split logs, listened attentively to pioneer sermons, more remarkable for the gravity and earnestness with which they were delivered than for their elegance or accuracy. We are informed that for many years the venerable Stephen Stilly was the first and only preacher of the gospel in that portion of the county now known as Rose Clate precinct.

TRADING FACILITIES.

Prior to the erection of the mill on big creek by Aaron Neal, a single rickety horse mill was the sole dependence for bread for the early settlers, with the exception of now and then a primitive hand mill. The people had no stores; now and then an adventurous trading boat passed down the river and supplied the wants of such of the settlers as were able to purchase, until a few years later a man by the name of James Anderson, opened a dry goods store, and by his liberality and fair dealing long enjoyed the patronage and confidence of the settlers.

ORGANIZATION OF POPE COUNTY.

All of Pope and Hardin counties originally belonged to Gallatin and Johnson counties. Pope county was organized Jan., 10th 1816, with Robert Lacey, Benoni Lee and Thomas Ferguson associate justices of the first County Court, Joshua Scott was the County Clerk and Samuel Omelvany was the Treasurer. On the the 28th day of May 1816, the County Court of Pope County ordered the building of a court house of hewed logs 24x26 feet, with a shingle roof, together with other public buildings. Sarahsville was the county seat; the name

was changed to Golconda on the 24th day of June 1819.

TOWNSHIP OFFICERS.

On the 7th day of December 1819, Ezekiel McCoy and Samuel Omelvany were appointed overseers of the poor in Monroe township, which included all that part of Hardin County taken from Pope. In 1820, Amos Chipps was appointed a constable, and in 1832 Moses Twitchell, James Mott and Walter Watson, were appointed trustees of Township 12, Range 8, East.

FIRST STORE AND FERRY LICENSE.

In 1832 Moses Twitchell received a license to keep a store at Twitchell's mill, and on the same date William Palmer, James McFarlan and Alexander Blair, obtained ferry license to operate ferrys as follows: one at Cave-in-Rock, one near Elizabethtown and one near the present site of Mineral City. They each paid \$1.50 per year for their franchise.

ESTABLISHMENT OF HARDIN CO.

On the 2nd day of March 1839, the County of Hardin was established by an act of the legislature, which act was subsequently, on the 8th day of January 1840 amended. The acts provided for the calling of an election by the oldest Justice of the Peace, for the location of a seat of Justice, and for the election of County Commissioners and other elective officers. The election was held by Thomas Cowser on the 11th day of April 1840 and McFarlan's ferry on the Ohio river was chosen as the county seat, V. L. C. Palmer was elected Clerk of the County Commissioners' Court and James Steele sen., James A. Whitesides and Thomas Cowser, were elected County Commissioners; thereupon the officers were sworn in, and went into session as a County Court on the same day; the Court adjourned on the 13th day of April 1840, to meet in special session on the 17th day of the same month. Thus after the period of 35 years from the earliest settlements Hardin County was established.

ITS SUBSEQUENT ADVANCEMENT.

During the transition period from the earliest times to organization of the county in 1840 there had been a gradual and continuous improvement and advancement in all the material interests of the country. Churches had been built, schools maintained and mines opened. The forest had been cleared; the peacock plow had been substituted for

carey; the blacksmith's pitchfork of iron was superseding the wooden one of the farmer; scythes and cradles took the place of reap hooks and sickles; government had been instituted, the establishment of justice ordained; the first great step toward civilization had been taken and the gales of prosperity had fairly set in; the hopeful eye might well anticipate the blessings of the future.

STATISTICAL SHOWING IN 1849.

The statistical and business interests of the county for the year 1849, exhibits the following showing:

One Iron Furnace was in operation with a capital of \$16,000, employing sixty men per year.

The county contained the following numbers of live stock and the following amount of productions:

Horses.....	554
Neat Cattle.....	1,774
Sheep.....	1,554
Swine.....	3,953
Value of Poultry, all kinds.....	\$886.00
Bushels of wheat.....	3,583
Bushels of oats.....	10,555
Bushels of rye.....	42
Bushels of buckwheat.....	3
Bushels of corn.....	62,066
Pounds of wool.....	7,500
Pounds of cotton.....	370
Cords of wood sold.....	2,984
Value of dairy products.....	\$455.00
Value of orchard products.....	855.00
Gallons of wine.....	3
Val of home-made goods.....	\$5,319.00
Value of garden products.....	82.00
Number of retail stores.....	4
Capital invested.....	\$11,656.00
Value of lumber.....	600.00
Number of flour and grist mills, 6	
Value of furniture man'fd.....	\$50.00
Capital in all other manufactures not included.....	\$31,000.00
Total population of county.....	1,390

ITS MINERAL RESOURCES.

Lead ore was discovered in the county long prior to its organization in the region about Lead Hill. In 1843 similar discoveries were made about Rose Clare. But little was done toward the development of the mines till about the year 1845, when a Company from Alton, Ill., commenced operating the mines, and carried on the work for some eighteen months when they became discouraged, and sold out to other parties who carried on the work till 1849 when the California gold-fever again caused a suspension of the work. In 1864 the mines were again worked for a short time by a New York Company, and later, in 1869, Messrs. Colby, Kinney & Hale resumed the work with vigor. Since that time large sums of money have been ex-

pende for the purpose of enlarging the work,—and the Rose Clare Lead & Spar Company, who are the present owners, have sunk their shaft to the depth of two hundred and twenty feet. The prospect for permanent gain seems to be excellent, and we are informed that the business is at present yielding a handsome dividend. Iron, Lead, Fluor Spar and other minerals are found in the county in great abundance, and the indications are that at no very distant day the mineral resources of the county will be productive of vast wealth. The first iron furnace built in the county was, and is yet, called the Illinois Furnace; it was erected and put into operation in 1839 by Chalon Guard & Co., and continued in operation many years. It is now owned by the Illinois Furnace Company, a corporation organized under the laws of the State of Indiana. It is not now in operation.

The Marsha Furnace was built in 1843 by Daniel McCook, who was at one time County Judge of the county. His family descendants are well known to history—three of his sons having served as Generals in the Union army during the late war.

ADVANCEMENT IN AGRICULTURE.

The advancement of the agricultural interests of the county have perhaps outstripped all others. The most approved kinds of farming implements are now in daily use. A more thorough and systematic course of cultivation has been adopted, and the farming communities are tending rapidly to competence and wealth. Corn, wheat, oats and potatoes are the staple products, while the soil is well adapted to vegetables of all kinds. Apples, peaches and other fruits are produced, and grapes are successfully cultivated in some localities.

THE NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE.

In 1859 the first county newspaper was established by J. Langdon, who was the editor and publisher. In 1860 the publication was suspended on account of the death of its publisher. The county was then without a paper for a period of ten years. In 1871 S. S. Bark commenced the publication of a paper called the "Hardin Mineral," and kept it up till October 1872. During this time C. W. Wilkinson published a paper called the "Hardin Democrat," which also suspended during the fall of 1872. Our present county paper, the "Hardin Gazette," is edited and published by James A. Lowry. It has been in continued and successful operation from 1872, to the present and bids fair to become a complete success, not only pecuniarily but on account of its merits as a useful and substantial county paper.

THE CURTAIL FROM GALLATIN.

The territory of Hardin county was enlarged, by an act of the Legislature passed on the 20th day of February 1847, by which that portion of the county now called the curtail was taken from Gallatin and annexed to Hardin.

ELIZABETHTOWN.

Elizabethtown, the county seat of the county since its organization, was incorporated by an act of the Legislature, passed February 13th 1857. It has subsequently re-organized as an incorporated town under the general laws of the State, and is a flourishing town having a population of about seven hundred inhabitants.

ROSE CLARE.

Rose Clare is the next town of importance. It was incorporated in the year 1872, and has a population of about four hundred. The mining companies heretofore mentioned are located here.

CAVE-IN-ROCK.

Cave-in-Rock, situated on the Ohio river is the most central town of the county. It has a fine trade and a good landing, and is the center of the potato growing region, large quantities of which are shipped from there annually. It has a population of about 350 inhabitants.

PARKINSON AND MINERAL CITY.

Parkinson's Landing and Mineral City are flourishing trading points on the river below Rose Clare. The potato trade of the former is nearly equal to that of Cave-in-Rock.

POPULATION IN THE YEAR 1870.

The population of the county by precincts in 1870 was as follows:

Cave-in-Rock	869
McFarlan	827
Monroe	1,468
Roek Creek	856
Rose Clare	533
Sellers, (now Battery Roek) ..	569

Total population in 1870. . . . 5,113

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The county has now within its territory thirty-one school houses, and some of them are decidedly respectable buildings. Schools are regularly maintained from five to nine months in each year, and the cause of education, fostered as it is by our admirable free school system, has taken high vantage ground as a power for good in the land. Public sentiment demands teachers of a high order and will have none others.

RELIGIOUS ENTERPRISE.

Churches also, are numerous. There are now as many as twelve in the county, of various denominations, and the different memberships are composed of men and women of intelligence and enterprise. May the

good effects of their labors long be seen and remembered in our midst.

COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

The commercial and business interests are equally gratifying. Several good steam flouring mills are in operation in the county, besides saw mills and water mills,—all of which are doing well. Blacksmith shops, wagon shops, cooper shops and furniture establishments are located in different parts of the county. Dry goods stores, family grocery and drug stores &c., to the number of twenty-five or thirty are in constant operation. In short, our business interests are in a flourishing condition, and property, both in amounts and values, has rapidly increased during the last few years, so much so indeed, that upon a fair and proper assessment of the county the taxable property would now probably reach two millions of dollars.

CONCLUSION.

Thus we have briefly sketched the progress of the county from the earliest settlements to the present time and have intended to give a faithful outline of some of the most important facts connected with our history. That we have fallen short in many instances, the committee is quite sensible. The short time allowed for the completion of the work and the scanty assistance afforded by some of the different localities will account for any omission that may occur prejudicial to any particular locality in the county; other facts have been omitted, because their insertion here would have made the sketch so disjointed as scarcely to have been readable. All such facts however as are worthy may be preserved in the archives of the county.

In conclusion the committee begs the indulgence of the public to observe that in this short review abundant causes for congratulations may be found. Our prosperity, though not so great as some sections of our common country, is the result of our admirable system of free government, achieved sword in hand for us by our fore-fathers a hundred years ago when this part of our country was a wilderness. Let us on this Centennial day be thankful to Almighty God, that their handiwork has stood the shock of a hundred years and that the union of thirteen states of inferior magnitude effected by them has swelled to a mighty constellation of thirty eight States of the first magnitude that now reflect their effulgence in one and unbroken ray of light throughout earth, leavening and quickening

the minds of all men with the spirit of universal freedom, which the Author of our being intended as the birth-right of all the nations of the earth.

Permit us also to request those in whose hands we must, in the course of nature shortly resign the great and solemn trusts that have been confided to us, that they see to it that through sunshine and storm, for another hundred years the flag we love

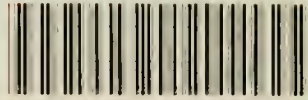
to honor shall float in majestic grandeur over every inch of American soil, the sign of perpetual union, prosperity and peace to every portion of our blessed country.

Dated at Elizabethtown, Illinois,
July 4th A. D. 1876.

L. F. TWITCHELL,	Chairman.
FRANKLIN DIMICK,	} Com- mittee.
JOHN VINYARD,	
ELIHU OXFORD,	
EDWARD SHEARER	
JOHN MITCHELL	



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