

The Shelby County Herald
Wednesday, January 15, 1930
Letter From "Hank" Carroll
Shelbyville, Mo.

Lentner, Mo., Jan. 3, 1930

Dear Sir:

We gladly accept the Herald's invitation to contribute all we know with reference to the pioneer days of the Herald, altho it is a very small item. But to begin, will say that the Herald and I are of the same age, almost exactly, so we have grown up together and have been constant friends all those years. However, the Herald has us beat in one way at least, as it has had more bosses and managers than we. As we understand it both of us began our career, or existence, in 1868. And beyond this period deponent sayeth not. Our earliest recollections take us back a short time after that. To the days when we could still hear the howl of the timber wolf and the call of wild turkeys, both of which were still very numerous. Our grandfather, James Carroll, and family came to Shelby county a few years before our time and settled on the farm now owned by Wm. R. Gray and when his son, Benjamin W. Carroll, married he settled on and improved the farm now owned by the corn and watermelon king, Chas. Carroll, and here in a small log cabin the writer first saw the light of day on March 24th, 1868, and this was our home until the spring of 1882, when our father, as we have often told, sold out and emigrated to Oregon, making the trip in the covered wagon. Father was, besides being a good farmer and hard worker, very fond of hunting, and altho he always used the old fashioned muzzle loading rifle always provided plenty of meat as there was plenty of all sorts of game, including wild hogs, millions of ducks and wild pigeons and we have tramped many hours with him over the hills and valley of old Salt River on his many hunts, and his old rifle is still doing duty as we are informed by its present owner, John W. Winston, of Joseph, Oregon, to whom father gave it many years ago. In those days cornbread was a regular part of the daily diet and father made regular trips to the old mill at Walkersville. On many of them we went along and to us it was quite a treat, in fact so great that if we were denied the pleasure, a woeful cry would go up and sometimes so long and loud that father would stop the team and come back and give us some hickory tea, which was a sure and certain cure. But the memory of that old mill, then owned and operated by old Tom Swearngen, was indelibly fastened upon our young mind and we shall never forget the pleasure we had in watching the wheels go round and the old whip saw go up and down as it did and the beautiful rolls of wool that came from the old carding machine, all of which were operated by water power. In those days the river was fed constantly and regularly from the many smaller streams that had as their source the large prairies around Lentner and all along its course, which were nothing short of swamps in those days, and the water flowed constantly into the river and there were few days in the season that there was not plenty of water to run the mill. The river in those days was full of fish as were many of the smaller streams that emptied into it, and good fish could be caught any day and especially was the fishing fine just below the old dam at Walkersville where we have stood and watched our father and others catch some fine specimen of the channel cat as well as many others. Father was also a great "bee hunter" and always had his larder plentifully furnished with honey, altho he could not eat this delicacy himself. His way of hunting bees was different to any we ever saw anyone else use, but was a great success. In the winter time when a nice warm day would come, such as today is, he would get an old bucket, holding about three gallons, put in some ashes, then take from the old fire place, which of course we had and always used, some good live coals, place them in the bucket and

cover them with more ashes, then he would get some strained honey, thin it a little with water, put in a bottle, and take some honeycomb, his gun and two or three of us kids, and take to the woods. Finding a likely place he would proceed to roll up some of the comb and place on some of the live coals of fire to burn. This would burn slowly but surely and the scent of which was trailed by any bees that happened to be near and usually in a short time one or two would be seen gradually approaching, carefully keeping within the scent of the burning comb. He would then take the bottle of diluted honey, pour some on some of the comb and soon the bee would alight on it and proceed to fill up and when full would begin its flight back to its home in some old hollow tree. The first few would make many winding turns to get their bearing and finally strike the famous "bee line" and he would watch closely its course. After several had come and gone they would make less and less of these winding take offs and finally arise and go straight away, and soon he had the course and would go and look along that course and if he failed to find them soon would move his bait that way and get the course again. Sometimes they would reverse the course so he knew they were between the first set and the last and seldom, if ever, did he fail to soon locate the tree.

There were eight children in our family and when winter came with its snow, all sorts of contrivances were rigged up for coasting down the big hill on which the old cabin stood and for weeks it was our daily pleasure to slide down that old hill and soon it would resemble the famous Otter slide. We wore our more boots (we always wore boots in those days) than a millionaire could buy today climbing up that old hill, not mentioning gloves and trousers that always had to be half soled several times a year as we were not at all careful whether we were on the sled or board or just going down, any old way to beat the others. But we lived and thrived, all except one brother, who only lived to be twelve years old and died with "head disease" as they called it in those days, and this writer came very near going the same way at the same time, but for some reason the good Lord spared our worthless life to be a bother to the rest of the world. In those days chills and fever were common and often two or three or more of us were in bed at the same time shaking with a chill. But by the help of Ayers Cherry Pectoral and the draining of all the prairie land we all got thru and outgrew its effects. And when Christmas came it was a merry sight to see the little stockings that were hung around the old fire-place where old Santa could not help but see them, as he always did.

But this article is not intended as a family history in any respect, but as the Herald asked, only reminiscent of our early recollections. We have always been glad we were born and reared in an old log cabin and around the old fire-place, where in the cold winter you could and would freeze on one side and burn on the other, yet there were many things in those days to enjoy as we did not know of so many new things we have today we were supremely happy in our childish way.

The first election we remember was when a good old neighbor, Brack Pollard, who lived one and a half miles north of Lentner, got the political bee in his bonnet and ran for some office (I think representative) and was elected and there was great rejoicing among his few and wide spread neighbors. Our memory goes back just far enough to remember well the old court house and the early days of Jim Lloyd, who was just starting out in his professional life. I was summoned there once on a case in which a yearling calf was in dispute between two men and one of them was a brother-in-law of ours and we knew the calf well, and in the course of questioning me Mr. Lloyd, who was counsel for the other party, asked me if I was sure I would know this calf if seen among others. I said I could, then he asked if I knew this was the calf, and I said I would swear to it, and he said that's all right, you have already sworn to tell the truth, and you say this is so and so's calf, and the whole bunch of spectators laughed long and loud.

We also remember the old Shelbyville fair ground well and attending several fairs there just

before it was discontinued. In those days most all travel was by the old lumber wagon, as they were called, and my parents would get up very early, get the children dressed and start out by sunup and get home by dark. The Clarence band usually furnished the music for the fair, going over and back each evening in their old band wagon, which to me was a wonderful looking thing, the body being built in the shape of a new moon, and as they went and came along the old road back of our place along the river they would play several tunes, and believe me, it was grand, being late in the evening it would ring and reverberate along the valley and hills with its echoes until it died away. It was very thrilling and we always stood out in the back yard and listened to the music.

We started our correspondence to the Herald some thirty years ago and while it has been very irregular and never amounted to much it has been interesting and withal worth while. Several editors have come and gone in that time. Our very, very good old friend, Joe Doyle (peace to his memory) was to us the best and finest of real friends, always encouraged us to keep on and when he sold out to C.E. Wailes he remembered us in a very fine way, and we hope he will live to again become its editor. Notwithstanding, the present editor is just as good, as was Mr. Wailes, Mr. Ennis and others. All were fine friends and we shall never forget them. Mr. Wailes had some time before been our school teacher and while we had had many teachers, he succeeded in getting more ideas into our numb scull than any other teacher. He was a prince at teaching school, and we owe him a great deal for many things we learned under his tutorship. Uncle Joe Doyle seemed to take more than a passing interest in us and once insisted on our going into his office and becoming a helper, but I was too timid and refused. But we knew his intentions were of the best and no doubt if we had listened to him we might have amounted to something.

The Herald has been in ours and my home for as long as I can remember and will continue to be a welcome visitor as long as we are able to get cash to keep it coming.

What we have said may and may not be what the editor wanted. Anyway he said to say what and all we cared to and if a few hundred write as much, the old paper will have to be increased in pages far beyond its present scope. May the Herald and its editor live on and on and continue to bring the news as it has for the past sixty years.