

# HISTORY OF SHELBY COUNTY

## CHAPTER I.

DISCOVERY AND EARLY SETTLEMENTS—LOG CABIN DAYS—SETTLERS OF 1833—A SURVEYING PARTY—CHOLERA EPIDEMICS—THE FIRST ELECTION—A POSTOFFICE AND STORE INSTALLED—SHELBY COUNTY FORMED AND ORGANIZED AND SOME EVENTS WHICH FOLLOWED—INDIANS—WED ANIMALS AND GAME—THE PIONEER WEDDINGS—PIONEER MINISTERS—FIRST SETTLEMENTS MADE IN TIMBER—PIONEERS, PIONEER HOMES AND COMFORTS—AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS—FISHING.

### DISCOVERY AND EARLY SETTLEMENT.

Ever since the day that Lot and Abram divided and the former chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, which was fertile and well watered, and Abram journeyed in the opposite direction, hath the son of man been looking for fertile plains, rich valleys and ever-flowing streams of pure water. Indeed, throughout all ages hath man endured hardships of every description and denied himself all the joys of society in order that he might find broader acres of more fertile land and an abundance of water. This desire burning in the breasts of strong men is what prompted them to turn their faces westward from the coasts of the Atlantic and seek new homes in the interior of the then wild and uncultivated portion of the United States bordering the great Mississippi river. Many were the men who traveled from Virginia and the Atlantic sea-coast states westward

into the bluegrass sections of Kentucky and Tennessee and from thence followed the course of the setting sun across the Father of Waters into Missouri—all seeking fertile soil and fountains of living water where the toil of their hands would yield greater return. Thus it was that Missouri was placed upon the map and became inhabited by men and women of noble blood, and thus it was that Shelby county became a part of this glorious and imperial commonwealth.

There is a difference of opinion among former history writers of Shelby county as to whether or not the county was ever a part of Marion county. In this connection Judge James C. Hale, in writing the historical sketch contained in the atlas published by Edwards Brothers in 1878, says:

"We know that some of our respected old citizens hold to the belief that Shelby was once a part of Marion, but this view,

however, cannot be a correct one, for in 1826 Marion county was taken from Ralls by legislative act and its boundary lines fixed. The western boundary of Marion was fixed where it remains today, on a range line between ranges 8 and 9, and in 1831 Monroe county was organized from Ralls, with its northern boundary line fixed within two miles of where it remains today, still leaving all the territory between Marion, Monroe and the Iowa line unorganized: so we conclude that Shelby was until its organization as a distinct and separate county a part of Ralls. Under the old territorial organization, citizens of unorganized territory may have been required to pay taxes at the nearest county seat; of this we cannot speak authoritatively, because the records and books at our command furnish us no certain information on the subject.

"In the early organization of this state into counties, the object of the legislature seems to have been to make as many counties as the population of the county would permit. And this may have been the reason for restricting Marion to its present limits. Be this as it may, however, we cannot agree that Shelby was ever a part of Marion after the organization of Marion into a county."

From information at our command, and from as thorough an investigation as it is possible for us to make, we can agree with the judge in part only.

The territory embraced in Shelby was not included by the legislative enactment creating Marion county in 1826, as Judge Hale says; but what was later and is now Shelby county was, as the records of Marion county show, attached

to Marion, at some date, for military, civil and judicial purposes. In this connection, however, we will begin at the beginning and bring the history down from the discovery of the country to the organization of the county. The title to the soil of Missouri, including Shelby county, was, of course, primarily vested in the original occupants who inhabited the country prior to its discovery by the whites, or civilized nations. The aborigines, or Indians, being savages, possessed but few rights that civilized nations considered themselves bound to respect; so, therefore, when the white men found this country in the hands of the savages, they claimed it by right of discovery. The discoverer of Missouri was Fernando De Soto, in 1541. De Soto was a Spaniard. He came as far north as New Madrid county and then moved west across the Ozark mountains. De Soto died in the spring of 1542 and was buried in the Mississippi river.

The Spanish, however, were not the first to settle Missouri. The French pushed westward, and in 1682 La Salle formally took possession of the whole country in the name of Louis XIV and called the country Louisiana, in honor of the reigning king of France. Spain acquired all the territory west of the Mississippi by the treaty of 1763. The territory was, however, ceded back to France in 1800. The country remained in the possession of the French until April 30, 1803. This is the date of the memorable "Louisiana Purchase." The contract was made by Livingston and Monroe for the United States, and Napoleon for France. The signing of the contract took place May 2, 1803 and was ratified by the United States senate,

October 17th of the same year. The consideration for this vast amount of land was fifteen million dollars, one-fourth of which was remitted on account of damage done to the trade of the Ohio country after Louisiana had been transferred from Spain to France. (For further information on the subject, see "Early History," Chapter 11.)

#### LOG CABIN DAYS.

It is impossible to state definitely, without chance of error, who really was the first settler of Shelby county as its territory is now limited. In the primitive days of 1812 came a party of hunters from Kentucky. Edward Whaley, Aaron Foreman and three others entered the county from the west, hailing from Boone's Lick country, on the Missouri river, en route to the Mississippi. Hunting for the head of Salt river, they became lost on North river, instead, and followed it to its mouth. They explored this country in a degree, but finally settled in Marion and Ralls county. Even before these came hunters and trappers wandering along Salt river, then called Auhaha, or Oaliaha, finding the forest desolate unless they found the red man in his primeval home.

As far as statistics bear witness, there were no permanent settlements until or previous to the year 1830. In 1831, log cabin days opened up in this country. A Mr. Norton crossed over from Monroe county in the spring of that year and built a cabin on Black creek, right on the bluff (section 33-57-9). In company with a hireling he brought a drove of hogs to feed on the wild mast, which thrived luxuriantly in that early day. He left the attendant to care for the

swine and he returned. His name cannot be learned, but it is probable that he had such a lovely time he forgot his name, if he ever had one. Close by his cabin he had a large hog-pen in which he had to shelter his stock at night to keep it from the wolves, which were in large numbers and very treacherous, sometimes attacking stock by day as well as night; so the keeper also had to keep a close watch by day. He remained a year, and his cabin was later used by David Smallwood.

In the fall of 1831, Maj. Obadiah Dickerson came over from Marion county and built a cabin on the north side of Salt river (about the center of section 17-57-10), near where the present road from Shelbina to Shelbyville crosses that stream. The year following he returned and brought his family to his new home. It is a popular opinion of statistics as they can be gathered that Mr. Dickerson was the first bona fide white settler of Shelby county.

John Thomas was another early settler of the county—the latter days of 1831 or the early spring of 1832, on a claim on Clear creek, where afterwards Miller's mill was built (section 18-58-9). Old Jack Thomas, as he was familiarly known, used to say that he was the first settler of Shelby county "that far up," meaning north, and that his house was the picket post of civilization when it was first built. A few hunters straggled along after Jack Thomas, but they probably were not permanent settlers, as nothing definite can be learned of them. In the fall of 1832 a cabin was built by Russell Moss (section 28-57-9) three miles northwest of Hunnewell. He came from Monroe county and moved his

family from that locality in 1833. The Mosses were Kentuckians, and Mr. Moss was well versed in pioneer history and was of assistance to history writers.

#### SETTLERS OF 1833.

Henry Saunders came to Shelby in the early spring of 1833 and settled one-half mile northeast of Lakenan (on section 6—56—9), and to the south of him his brothers, Albert and Addison, settled.

Samuel Buckner came in early spring and settled a mile and one-half north of Lakenan, west of Salt river (section 31—57—9). Mr. Buckner was a bachelor of a well-known Buckner family of Kentucky, and controlled a number of slaves. He was a man of education and intellectual qualifications, generous and hospitable, but morally dissolute.

Hon. William J. Holliday came to Shelby in May, 1833. He settled on Black creek, on the southwest (section 6—57—9). In the year 1876, Mr. Holliday wrote a series of interesting and valuable sketches of the early settlers which were published in the *Shelbyville Herald*. The sketches were very valuable, and reliable information was gained therefrom for the history of Shelby county. The sketches only went up to the Civil war, but as Mr. Holliday was a gentleman of intellectual attainment, and his mind clear and memory keen, his work was considered authentic and invaluable. According to Mr. Holliday there were, to the spring of 1833, only twenty-six families living within the present limits of Shelby county, and these for the most part were located in the neighborhood of Oak Dale, in the southeastern part of the county, in the present Jackson township.

Others settled as follows: Thomas Holman lived on section 17, two miles south of Oak Dale; Russell W. Moss and Robert Duncan were still farther south, section 28; William B. Broughton was on section 5 and his home was called Oak Dale; George Parker was on the northwest quarter of section 8, on Douglas's branch, and near by on the same section was Abraham Vandiver; Thomas T. Clements had built a cabin on the south part of section 21, near the present Hardy's school-house, four miles southeast of Oak Dale; Cyrus A. Saunders lived on section 9, nearly two miles southeast of Oak Dale; Levi Dyer lived on congress lands, west of Black creek, in this township and range.

Then west of Oak Dale and nearly south of Shelbyville lived the following, in congressional township 57, range 10: Angus McDonald Holliday, located two miles west of Oak Dale, on Black creek (section 1); Thomas H. Bounds built a cabin on the west bank of Salt river, at the mouth of a creek and near a fine spring (northeast corner east one-half, section 23), about three and one-half miles northeast of the present site of Shelbina; and Samuel Balls lived near Angus McDonald Holliday, five miles southeast of Shelbyville, in the northeast corner (section 1).

John Eaton and George Eaton located north of Salt river, east of the road from Shelbina to Shelbyville, on section 9. West of the Eatons a mile or two lived George and James Anderson, north of Salt river (section 8); on the north of Salt river, on the first farm north of "long bridge," on the Shelbina-Shelbyville road (section 17), was Maj. Obadiah Dickerson's cabin home. A little farther

up the river on the same side, north of the present site of Walkersville, lived Peter Roff and Nicholas Watkins, on section 7. South of Watkins, nearer Walkersville, and on section 18 lived "King" Eaton (E. K. Eaton). South of Eaton lived James Blackford, on section 19. James Swartz lived about six miles northeast of Shelbyville, on North river, below where the road crosses the stream (section 12—58—10).

Elijah Pepper lived about five miles west of Shelbyville. John Thomas lived north of Oak Dale, on Clear creek (section 18). On this site Miller's mill was later built. Hon. William Holliday said in 1876 only six of these pioneer settlers were living: James Anderson, James Blackford, Nicholas Watkins, George Eaton, Cyrus H. Saunders, and W. H. Holliday.

#### CHOLERA EPIDEMICS.

Everyone who has heard of the pioneer days of Shelby county connects the year of 1833 with the cholera epidemic, which ravaged the country, and the early settlers were poorly provided to cope with so destructive a disease. It broke out June 3, 1833, at Palmyra, Mo., which was then a town of some six hundred inhabitants, and 105 persons died from the fatal malady. Palmyra was closely connected with Shelby at this time, and many fled to the rural districts for safety. Young William P. Matson, a stepson of Maj. Obadiah Dickerson, was in Palmyra when the cholera broke out. He started for the country, and when he reached the home of Angus McDonald Holliday on Black creek he found the stream was so high he could not ford it,

and here he remained for the night, during which he was taken violently ill and died in great agony on the following morning. At his burial, his host, Mr. Holliday, was taken violently ill and died on the following morning. The country was in a restless condition for some weeks.

News of the fatalities of the infected districts, was spread abroad, and fugitives from these districts sought refuge with their friends. There was no effort to quarantine against nor expel those in their midst.

Fortunately, there were no other deaths, and by the middle of July the dread disease had disappeared. But the death of William P. Matson, June, 1833, was the first death on record in Shelby county. The country was new and things were yet in a disorganized state, but there remains no authenticated record previous.

#### A SURVEYING PARTY.

R. T. Holliday, a United States deputy surveyor, began a survey for the government in August, 1833, of ranges 11, 12 and 13, the districts to the west of where the principal settlements had been made. It began at the southeast corner of section 36—59—11. They surveyed and sectionized the ranges northward about sixty miles, to township 68, completing the work in the winter of 1834-35. Soon this new district commenced to fill up and improve. Addison Lair tells the story that it was during this survey, while they were at work on range 10, there occurred the famous "star shower" of November, 1833, and so frightened were they that all stopped work.

## THE FIRST ELECTION.

The first election ever held within what later was Shelby county was held in August, 1834. At this election Maj. Obadiah Dickerson and S. W. B. Carnegy were elected to the legislature, defeating the two Johns—John McAfee and John Anderson. In May of the same year Shelby county and some additional territory was formed by the county court of Marion county into Black Creek township, and it was, of course, a big compliment to have one of her citizens elected to this exalted position so soon after her creation. Major Dickerson was a well-informed man and a man of wide acquaintance in his day. He was the real founder of the city of Palmyra, Mo., and was the town's first postmaster and one of the county-seat commissioners. In regard to the major's career as postmaster of Palmyra, an early history of Marion county contains the following interesting story :

"The town (Palmyra) grew rather rapidly and in 1820 had 150 inhabitants. Those interested made efforts to increase the number of settlers, and in 1821 the first postoffice was established, the mail coming, when it did come, from St. Louis, on horseback, by way of New London.

"Maj. Obadiah Dickerson was the first postmaster. He kept the office in his hat a great portion of the time. Being frequently absent from home, in the woods hunting, or attending some public gathering of the settlers, the few letters constituting 'the mail' were deposited under the lining of his huge bell-crown hat, often made a receptacle for papers, documents, handkerchiefs, etc., by gentlemen of the older times. Asked why he

carried the office about with him in this way, the old major replied: 'So that if I meet a man who has a letter belonging to him I can give it to him, sir! I meet more men when I travel about than come to the office when I stay at home.' "

On one occasion a man from a frontier settlement came to Palmyra for the mail for himself and neighbors. Both post-office and postmaster were away from home. Going in pursuit, as it were, he found them over on North river. Major Dickerson looked over the contents of his office, selected half a dozen letters for the settler and his neighbors, and then, handing him two more, said: "Take these along with you and see if they belong to anyone out in your settlement. They have been here two weeks and no owner has called for them yet. I don't know any such men, and I don't want to be bothered with them any longer."

As the mail at the Palmyra postoffice increased, the major petitioned the department for a new and larger hat. In 1829, on account of the accession of General Jackson to the presidency, Major Dickerson, 'who was an Adams man, was removed, and Maj. Benjamin Meaas was appointed postmaster at Palmyra.

## THE FIRST PERMANENT SETTLER.

It is claimed by some, and perhaps is true, that Maj. Obadiah Dickerson was the first permanent settler in the territory afterwards organized into Shelby county. He settled in 1830 in sections 16 and 17, township 57, range 10, northeast of Walkersville, on the north side of Salt river. As stated before, he came from Palmyra, Marion county, which village he founded about ten years pre-

vious to his settlement in Shelby. He originally came from Kentucky and arrived in Missouri about 1816 or 1817, landing at Louisiana, Pike county, Missouri. He assisted in the organization of Pike county and also the city of Louisiana. In April, 1819, the first circuit court ever held in Pike was held in the Major's residence. Mrs. Dickerson died here in 1820 and the Major moved on north and westward to Palmyra. Here he resided until 1830, at which time he moved over into the territory of Shelby. He was a member of the Missouri legislature in 1835 and assisted in the organization of the county.

#### A POSTOFFICE AND STORE INSTALLED.

It was during the cholera epidemic at Palmyra the supply and postoffice for the new district were cut off, and out of this experience the settlers realized a need of conveniences nearer at hand. These settlers had to go to Palmyra for groceries, mail, and all the necessaries of life,—a distance of twenty-five miles and return. Breadstuffs were ground at Gatewood's and Massie's mills, a little north and west of Palmyra. During the winter of 1833-34, William B. Broughton brought on a small stock of general merchandise and opened a store in his house. His stock, though small, contained the necessaries of primitive life. That winter he secured a numerously signed petition asking for the establishment of a postoffice. This petition was graciously received at Washington and an office established at Mr. Broughton's residence and called Oak Dale, the name that pioneer town bears to this day. This was the first postoffice in the county, and Mr. Broughton was the first postmaster. Mails came in from Palmyra once a

week, and on that day the settlers met for social intercourse as well as business. The first store and the first postoffice was a great step in their onward stride, in the life of these pioneer heroes, and many a long fifty-mile drive did it save them, so meager was their equipment for travel.

His everyday life in the wilds of the new country to which he had come to make himself rich was such a monotonous round from day to day that indeed he had little to communicate to his friends of the South and East. Postage was very high, and if the early settlers received or sent two or three letters per family in a year they were indeed to be congratulated. Their usual way of sending or receiving tidings from their friends, and the news of the great world, from which they seemed almost entirely remote, was usually by the settler who journeyed back to his old home or by the mouth of the stranger coming in. His wants were few, and were, generally speaking, supplied by his rod and his gun, the latter being his indispensable weapon of defense.

#### SHELBY COUNTY FORMED AND ORGANIZED, AND SOME EVENTS WHICH FOLLOWED.

During 1833-34 immigration came on rapidly. The inconvenience of being so remote from the county seat, Palmyra, and a hope of inducing a more rapid settlement, prompted the pioneers to take steps necessary to organize their settlements into a new county, which was done in 1835 (see early history).

The year 1835 was as deeply impressed on the minds of the pioneer settlers as the "cold year" as for the year of county organization. The winter was a long one

and uncommonly severe. The new settlers were little prepared for extreme weather, and suffering was common throughout the newly settled districts. During February happened the day long designated as "cold Friday." The spring was late, cold and wet. About the 12th or 13th of May came a heavy freeze, freezing the ground to the depth of two feet. Buds on the fruit trees and bushes were swollen and all killed. Even some of the young forest trees were killed. Crops were resown and late.

The cold spring was followed later on by an early, cold fall. September 16th there was a heavy frost and freeze, damaging the late corn, vegetables and fruits. Much sickness followed, and it seemed the life of the early settler was a continuous hardship.

The summer of 1835, cholera again broke out in Palmyra. A panic ensued among its inhabitants, and many fled to this county for safety. Some of the fugitives built extemporaneous cabins along the streams or near the springs, and camped until all danger had passed. Though the settlers were held continuously in dread of the dire disease, there were no cases in this county.

Except during the "off" year, crops were miraculous during pioneer days, thus inviting immigration. Mr. Holliday said wheat was certain and would sometimes yield fifty bushels per acre. Corn and oats were good return, while hemp was a good and valuable crop. No grain insect molested the country until after the year 1840, and then insects made their appearance by degrees. All kinds of stock flourished well, grazing in the open until June, when the overgrowth would cover up the young, fresh grass;

but the settlers would burn off a large tract and the stock for miles around would congregate and feed on the fresh, tender blades, which made quick growth. It was the best way to keep the cattle corralled in the early days. Cattle died in large numbers from bloody murrain.

Mr. Holliday says in the early days there were no oats, clover nor bluegrass, and neither were there any pokeweed, pursley nor jimson weed. Neither were there any fruit trees except in the wild state, but every immigrant brought on his supply.

July 4, 1836, was a memorable date as the first glorious Fourth in our county. About two hundred persons met at the spring on Clear creek, five miles east and a little north of Shelbyville (section 18—58—9), where Miller's mill was built and located a short distance west of M. Dimmitt's rabbit farm. A grand barbecue and free dinner was served, and a patriotic good time was the order of the day. The occasion was pronounced a success.

The following year, 1837, the Fourth was celebrated south of Shelbyville, on the banks of Salt river, at Carnegy's spring; and so the glorious Fourth became an established celebration in Shelby county. However, at this celebration some of the more hilarious visited some of Shelbyville's groceries, which at this early day had learned to sell "fiery water," and a general disturbance ensued.

In the autumn of 1838, Shelbyville held its first agricultural fair, and the contest for premiums offered was a warm one. A good premium was offered to the farmer raising the largest amount on an acre of land. The story goes that

Charles Smith, Judge William Gooch and Col. William Lewis each put in a sealed oath of ninety-five bushels per acre. Other farmers proved they had raised more than fifty bushels per acre. The fair continued only a few seasons.

In January, 1838, Mr. John Dunn in the lead asked the county court for the organization of a school district of congressional township 58, range 11, under the name of Van Buren. It was done and preparations were begun for the first public school.

#### INDIANS.

Very few Indians were ever seen in the county after its first settlement. Occasionally a hunting party, or stragglers, passed through. 1839 a band camped near Hager's Grove and caused some alarm.

The old-timers can make your hair stand on end as they begin to tell of the Pottawatomie war, but it all turns to a false alarm and a huge joke. It occurred at the time the government had ordered the Indians to "move on" from Iowa to the southwest. A party of about sixty friendly Pottawatomie redskins, consisting of men, women and children, passed through the western part of our county enroute, causing widespread alarm. Some of the Indians, as was their custom while traveling, had climbed into a cornfield and were helping themselves to corn and pumpkins. Nothing was known of their presence in the country until they were discovered helping themselves to what they wanted. Wonderful had been the tales that had gone forth of the savagery of the redskin, and the merciless tortures which they inflicted upon their prisoners.

Their cunning and craftiness and their shooting from ambush had reached the pioneers before they turned their faces toward the setting sun, and now came to their minds all the warnings they had received to steer clear of the murderous, torturing redskin, and the settlement was thrown into a wild panic. They pictured an Indian war at hand and were totally unprepared. Alarm messengers were sent throughout the country, bidding all to repair to a certain formidable log house for safety. Other messengers were hastened to Shelbyville and Palmyra for re-enforcements and here and there for simple artillery and such weapons as the settlers possessed. And the story goes (and is vouched for) that the messenger reached Shelbyville with his eyes bulging, his hair like porcupine quills and his steed all afoam. The town was aroused to the indignities the Pottawatomie were about to inflict upon his fellowman, and a company was organized during the evening and arrangements made to await the volunteers from Palmyra, unless the cry of distress was heard in the meantime. Pickets were stationed out and the impromptu company was ready to start at the sound of trumpet. W. O. Peake was the messenger to give Palmyra the alarm and he played his part well. He reported the Indians ravaging the western part of Shelby county, that the inhabitants were fleeing from their homes, and unless they were squelched at once a great amount of havoc would ensue and the country devastated and depopulated. A word was sufficient. A common sympathy permeated the breast of every pioneer settler and Palmyra flew to arms. In an hour a goodly company was organized,

bearing sword and musket, and was on way to rescue from the red savage those who had befriended those who fled to them during the dire cholera scourge. The company carried with them the dragoon swords and other arms General Benjamin Means had preserved from the Black Hawk war. Gen. David Willock gave the orders. John H. Curd was their captain. After marching all night the company volunteers reached Shelbyville at 8:30 the following morning. Here they found a goodly re-enforcement. So it goes that they ate and drank, then drank again until the companies called. each other names, were first hot, then cold, till the drinks had lost effect and then they shook hands and made friends. Late in the day the companies started out to lick the Indians. That night they camped on Payton's branch and continued their march on the following morning. But they were soon apprised of the fact that the Indians had been gone some two days and were by that hour some fifty miles away. On investigation, they found the Indians had taken captive some "yaller" pumpkins, their ponies had "cabbaged" some "yaller" corn and they had killed a wild hog, but they had molested neither man, woman nor child, but in turn were bequeathing to white man their earthly possession, nature's forest, and all her beauty and freedom. The companies right about and homeward turned their faces. The Palmyra company parted with the other volunteers, with sad memories of imaginary insults and abuses which occasioned black eyes, some bloody noses and a few "peeled" faces. The Shelby County Military Company disbanded, but not without first voting their thanks to the Palmyra volunteers "for

the assistance they rendered us and the entertainment they furnished us." The Shelby settlers soon returned to their cabin homes, but many funny stories are still afloat which revert back to Shelby's Indian war.

One story which the second generation of the old-timers have never lost sight of is of old Uncle Malachi Wood. He placed his wife and child on one horse while he hurriedly mounted another and struck a "trot" for refuge. He was on the fastest steed and always kept in the lead of his loved ones. Mrs. Wood was not an adept at horsemanship, and in trying to come up to her husband lost her grasp on her darling. In an hysterical manner she cried out: "Oh, stop, Malachi, do stop! I have dropped my baby! Do stop, and help me save it!" Without curbing his speed or turning his head he shouted back, "Never mind the baby Let's save the old folks. More babies can be had."

Another goes that John B. Lewis lived in a sparsely settled country down near the present site of Walkersville. Mr. Lewis was, for that day, a man of wealth. He brought with him when he came three thousand dollars in gold, which he kept hid about his possessions. A son of John Payton galloped along the highway calling out: "Indians! Indians! fly for your lives." The Lewises were thoroughly aroused to the sense of impending danger. He hurriedly set Mrs. Lewis and three little children on one horse and started them to the south to the Moore settlement, Mrs. Lewis bare-headed and the children clothed just as the alarm had found them. Mr. Lewis hurriedly buried his wealth and hurried to the south afoot. The Moores had a

good, strong house and it refuged three or four neighboring families for a couple of days. The home was long after known as Fort Moore.

The whites had misinterpreted the queer actions of the Indians, knowing little of their superstitions. It seems the Indians had lost one of their number and several more were sick. They believed that an evil spirit had infested their band. To kill and banish the evil spirit the Indians had slain a dog, suspended it in the air and formed a circle with arrows stuck in ground, all pointing inward toward the body. When the settlers saw this, and the raid on their corn and pumpkin patch, they inferred it betokened death to them and possession of their lands and property.

#### WILD ANIMALS AND GAME.

The sports and means of recreation were not so varied among the early settlers as at present, but they were more exhilarating and more gratifying than the sports of today.

Hunters nowadays would be too eager to find within a reasonable proximity of their home the favorable opportunity enjoyed by the early settlers, deeming it a rare pleasure to spend a vacation on the watercourse or the wild prairies at hand in those days. And the early settler enjoyed it, too, for he had few other sports. He loved his dog and his gun and he found wild game of almost every species found now in our wild western prairies. The woods were full of wild game and were a paradise for hunters. Although the Indians had lived and hunted much here, the saying goes that "wild man and wild beast thrive together," and so as the red man's ranks had been thinning,

the wild beast had been increasing at an alarming degree to the safety of the settlers, and he killed not only for pleasure but for his safety. Bears, panthers and wolves abounded. The western and northwestern portion of the county was their principal retreat, because hunters from Monroe county had driven them in that direction. Bears were abundant in the northeastern portion in 1835-36. They were numerously killed in Tiger Fork and the fierce panther also existed here in large numbers. Many an early settler, as he sat by his hearth, with his family about him, felt his blood run cold as the piercing scream of the prowling panther was borne on the night wind, which whistled through the crevices of his lonely cabin. They were frequently encountered, and many of them slain by hunters. Wildcats and catamounts also prowled through the forest and were a menace to mankind. The early settler must always have his gun at hand, and he was in constant fear when away from his home for his loved one's safety, for the wild animals could often be shot from their cabins.

As late as 1841, two large black bears passed Dunn's school house, west of Shelbyville, on Black creek, going westward. They caused great alarm among the children. Near Vienna, Macon county, which was only twelve miles distant, bears were quite numerous at that late date. A large bear was killed near Stice's mill, Bethel, 1840.

The winter of 1835 some enormous animals were killed. John Winnegan, a man of small stature, but who loved to hunt, lived near where the Bethel to Nevada road crosses the Tiger fork. He killed two very large panthers that win-

ter near his home. The neighborhood settlers called them tigers and christened the stream on which they were killed Tiger fork of North river, which name it has since borne.

As for wolves, the county teemed with them. There were at least three varieties, the large black, the gray and the coyote or prairie wolf. The first two named made great depredations on the early settlers' flocks and herds, and it was difficult to raise sheep and hogs because of their inroads. Sometimes in a single night a whole herd of sheep or litter of pigs would fall the prey of those vicious animals. As a rule, all stock would be penned at night within a high fence enclosure, the only way to feel any safety. They would snatch up a pig and off with it. However, the hogs often showed fight and sometimes was able to protect their young and drive away the marauders.

In 1841 John B. Lewis was enroute southwest of Shelbyville for his home and was startled to hear what he thought was a person in distress. He **hastened** to render assistance, thinking perhaps some one had been assailed and waylaid, but found on nearing the spot whence came the cry that it was only the scream of a panther.

In 1840 Kindred Feltz, with some assistance, killed a panther in the northern part of the county that measured nine feet.

In 1845 after the county was comparatively well settled, while riding through the timber west of Shelbyville, Robert McAfee was attacked by a pack of gray wolves. The animals chased him, snapping and biting his legs and injuring his horse considerably.

Deer, turkey, ducks, geese and various other choice game could be had for the killing of it. One could go out and kill his venison steak for breakfast if he so desired. Wild turkey and squirrels were too abundant to be worthy of mention.

Fur animals existed in large numbers, such as otter, bear, muskrat, raccoon, mink, wildcat, beaver, wolf, fox and panther. The early settlers tell of seeing several herds of deer in a distance of four miles.

Numerous are the stories of the chase, hunting expeditions and adventures with the wild beast of the forest, which would be sufficient to interest the readers, but they would not be historic in their nature, only sufficient in detail to impress the reader with the condition of affairs during the early day of the settlers.

Serpents everywhere abounded and of such enormous proportions that but for the abundance of testimony the stories seem almost incredible. Quail, rabbit and grouse were scarce.

Another profitable recreation for the old settler was the hunting of bee trees. The forests along the water course were prolific. They were found on Salt river and all her tributaries and, in fact, along all the rivers in this and adjoining counties.

During the late summer, many hunters would go into camp for days at a time for the purpose of securing wild honey, which was very abundant and rich and commanded a good price in the home market.

Trapping wolves became a very profitable pastime after the state offered a reward for wolf scalps. The wolf became so daring was the reason of the bounty. At night they would make the forest ring

with their barks, and if dogs ventured out to drive them away they would be driven back by the wolves chasing them to the very cabin door.

No, music was cheap to the pioneers. They could be lulled to sleep any night by the screeching of the panther and the howling of the wolf, and deer was daily seen trooping over the wild prairies, a dozen or more in the drove, and it is said 'twas a pretty sight often seen when half a hundred or more were grazing together.

#### THE PIONEER WEDDINGS.

The pioneer wedding of the early period was not the display of elegance and planning as the wedding of the twentieth century. The fine points of display and finish were not at their command, and the tastes of the pioneers were plain and unselfish, hence no pomp nor display of paraphernalia was worth the while to consider. In those days there were few "store clothes," unless it was that brought in by the emigrant as he came in, but their clothes were for the most part homespun. The material was principally cotton or flax and wool. The women wore linsey, cotton and buckskin and the men the same with some jeans added.

A bridal outfit did not include a linen shower and a handkerchief and hosiery shower, a crystal nor a miscellaneous shower. Her toilet was plain, inexpensive and but little more than she otherwise would possess. It was all sufficient, it was sensible and in harmony with the manners and circumstances of the day, and she was just as sweet, as affable and as unselfish as the bride of our day. And the groom, in his jeans or homespun linen

trousers, his linsey shirt, his jeans coat and his coonskin cap, was just as gallant, as kind and no more domineering than the groom, all diamond besparkling, of today. Though the weddings did not bear the pomp and display, were not such brilliant society events, the union was as fortunate and felicitous and the event as joyous as of modern days. There was always a wedding and it was for their friends. All the neighbors had an invitation and all ever accepted most graciously.

There was all sorts of fun and merry making during the day. You were not invited to come in hat and gloves, to keep them on. It was a day's outing. Foot-racing, wrestling, shooting matches and any other diversion was the order of the day and dancing extended far into the morning hours. True, some of the guests came barefoot and the dancing hall was sometimes of the variety which had split puncheons substituted for the wax floor, from which the slivers had not been smoothed away, but the hardened sole of the foot was scarcely penetrable by an ordinary sliver. And then the wedding feast is worthy the consideration of man. There were venison steaks and delicious roasts—pig, turkey, grouse and mutton; there was corn pone with wild honey and delicious home-made maple syrup, and always the good old Missouri and Kentucky whiskey, pure and unadulterated, such as "we'uns" never sip. The banquet was all cooked in the old "Pilgrim mothers'" style, toothsome and savory to a degree.

And no newspaper, to which the family must cater, that the wedding may be chronicled as elegant to a degree, the bride the most beautiful and accom-

plished and the groom as possessing the most sterling qualities. Only the neighborhood to tell it abroad and express their good will.

And the dear little babies that came to brighten the lonely hours, to bring sunshine and music and mirth into the densest forest, the home of the bear, the wolf and the panther. True, their layette was not as superb and as white and silky as today, but the babies were just as good, just as strong, as bright, as happy and as welcome as the twentieth century babe. Yes, it was cuddled by its mother, not in a little outfit bought at a large department store, but she did weave the very material and was painstaking in the making thereof, while the proud father lulled it to sleep in a cradle fashioned by his own hand, with seasoned hickory bows for rockers. Within this little trough are laid some folds of homespun, or some soft, hatched but unspun flax, as soft as down, and into this little nest is cuddled the innocent little darling.

We have resurrected some of the earliest marriage dates. Doubtless the first marriage in Shelby county, after its organization, was Bradford Hunsucker and Miss Dicy Stice. The ceremony was performed by Esquire Abraham Vandiver, at the residence of Peter Stice, the father of the bride, near the present site of Bethel. The date of the marriage, as duly recorded, was April 30, 1835. The next was William S. Townsend and Edena A. Mills, May 10, 1835, Esquire William J. Holliday officiating. November 12, 1835, Gilbert Edmonds and Minerva J. Vandiver, also Tandy Gooch and Susan Duncan, Rev. Richard Sharp officiating on both occasions. February 18, 1856,

Charles Kilgore and Catherine Cochran, Esquire Abraham Vandiver officiating; February 28, 1836, Samuel S. Matson and Mary Creel, Rev. Richard Sharp officiating; March 31, 1836, William Holliday and Elizabeth Vandiver, Rev. Sharp officiating; April 7, 1836, Fantley Rhodes and Sarah Stice, Rev. Sharp officiating; May 24, 1836, James Shaw and Eliza Beavens, Judge A. E. Wood officiating; October 20, 1836, Benjamin F. Firman and Sarah Rookwood, Rev. Henry Louthan officiating; November 17, 1836, Baptist Hardy and Martha Davidson, Richard Sharp officiating; December 1, 1836, James Rhodes and Mary Musgrove, Rev. Sharp officiating.

#### PIONEER MINISTERS.

The lot of early settlers was accompanied by many hardships, but the lot of a minister on the frontier would be harder still if he tried to subsist on the income directly from his calling, but every new country and clime needs a minister and his shadow follows close upon the footprint of the earliest settlers.

They labor without money and without price. If he attempts to board, his liabilities will exceed his assets, and so he turns to the practical side of life and he toils as does his neighbor. In that day there existed no fund to support ministers on the frontiers, but he felt his call, he knew his duty and he dodged it not because it was hemmed in with hardships and strivings, with disappointments and with danger. They went to the front, they gained their substance as did their neighbor by their rifle and by their daily toil in the field and in the forest. The frontier preacher was an expert with the rifle, as was his laity.

Religious service was held in a neighbor's cabin. Notice of the service was promptly and widely circulated, and the people generally attended for protection and to secure game going and coming. The secret of a good attendance was twofold—some attended worshipping their creator in all their simplicity, and others went for the social side of the occasion. Here they told of their hunts, the latest news from everywhere, who was going back home and who had come, bearing some message from their loved ones at home.

In the fall of 1837, there was not a church nor school house in the county. The Methodists held a camp meeting during the season about a mile north of Oak Dale (N. W. 32—58—9.)

A circuit had been established connecting with the southeastern portion of the county. Rev. Richard Sharp, a local preacher, who lived at Sharpsburg, Marion county, frequently preached in this county. Rev. Henry Louthan, a Baptist, settled in this county at an early day, and sketches say he labored at his calling. Rev. Jeremiah Taylor, another Baptist, who lived in Marion, preached in this county prior to 1840, and other pioneer preachers are mentioned in township history.

#### FIRST SETTLEMENTS MADE IN TIMBER.

The early settlers always chose the timbered land as a necessity and convenience. The emigrants almost invariably came from Kentucky and Tennessee: some from New York, indirectly. These states in their primitive days were almost covered with forests, and the settlers there chose timber lands, cleared off what they wanted to cultivate and al-

ways reserved a portion which they called the woods, and "the woods" was the most important part of the farm, and wholly indispensable. When he came to Missouri, one drawback was the bleak prairies, and so he always hunted out the wooded district. Living without the forest, with the pioneer, was like living without his gun—it was a prime requisite. Then he must have a house to live in, rails for his fencing, wood for his fuel. In that day there was no railway to haul his fuel, no coal mine within reach or sight, and so we may little wonder at the prime importance of timber in that age. Along the various water courses which flowed across the country, on either side was a belt of timber. At certain places, usually near the outlets of the tributaries, the timber belt widened, forming a grove, and at these groves the settlements were usually made. Here started up the machinery which turned a wilderness, teeming with its wild animals, into macadamized streets and highways, \*planting here and there a seat of learning, or a candle on the hillside which lighteth all about it.

#### PIONEERS.

The early pioneers of our country were too busy making history to stop to preserve it. Practically speaking, the early years of the county, her cornerstone and her foundations, were most important to her future welfare. However, historic events were naturally slow, the life of the pioneers simple and uneventful.

The experience of one settler differed little from that of his neighbor. Nearly all of them were poor, and those who brought with them some riches faced about the same inconveniences and hard-

ships as his neighbor, and stood generally on the same footing. It was a time of self-reliance and bravery, persevering toil, of privations endured through faith of a "good time coming."

It is common to indulge in flattering adulations in chronicling the lives of early settlers. Their virtues are extolled immoderately, their vices seldom hinted at, but we must remember that they were human and humanity is not all grace nor all virtue. It is both strong and weak, sometimes one and both at the same time, and so it follows that our forerunners were men and women with all the virtues and graces and all the vices and frailties that you find in the human race in any community. They may have been stronger in ways than their descendants, perchance they may even have had more weaknesses. They were hospitable and generous, yet they would (some of them) swear, get drunk and fight. Do not their successors do even so?

Good works were wrought, good deeds rendered, but there existed also cheating at a "hoss swap" and betting on the cock fight. There was diligence and perseverance, but there was also laziness and shiftlessness, there was good and bad, and if they were poor they were recompensed by being free from the burden of pride and vanity, free from the anxiety and solicitude which always accompanies the possession of wealth. Though they had few neighbors, they were in love and fellowship with those they had.

Envy, covetousness and strife had not crept in to mar their free intercourse. A common interest and common sympathy bound as one family. There was no aristocracy, no caste. In this one point they towered above the present generation,

though aristocracy, generally speaking, is comparatively foreign in our county. Our people today are plain, as was the simple frontier life of the pioneer, and in all, good and bad, the life of the frontier in 1835 was about as good and as bad as the inhabitants of 1911. The log cabin people dressed plain, fed on humble fare, but they lived comfortably, happily, abundantly and justly. Many a pioneer declared the happiest days of his life was when he lived in his log cabin home, when every man was on an equality, when aristocratic feeling was not tolerated, when what one had they all had. And they must have meant it, every word, for many a pioneer, when this county became pretty well settled, moved on west, to live again the pioneer life their few remaining years. They were men of activity and energy, or they would never have faced the ills and hardships of frontier life, and when their forms were bent with the storms they had faced, they still yearned for "other worlds to conquer," and they again turned their face toward the setting sun.

#### PIONEER HOMES AND COMFORTS.

The first buildings in the county were a cross between the "hoop cabins" and Indian bark huts. As soon as there were enough men in the county to raise a log cabin, they were in style. While the cabins were homely, yet they could be made comfortable.

A window with glass was a rarity and signified an aristocracy which few could afford. They often built a window opening and covered it with greased paper, which let in some light, but often there was nothing over the opening, letting in the air and light, but more often the crev-

ices between the logs without chinking or daubing was more than sufficient for both light and air.

The doors were fastened with old-fashioned wooden latches, and for all mankind passing that way the latch-string hung out—thence the origination of the old-time hospitality and the saying “the latch-string hangs outward.” It is noticeable the reverence with which the pioneer always speaks of those log cabin homes, and it causes one to feel that it is indeed doubtful if palaces even sheltered happier hearts and more gladsome days than the log cabin homes. They were different, yea! a description may enlighten us on many points, and a very good one of the average log cabin, landmarks of other days, follows. This home was to be occupied by a bride and groom :

“The logs were round, with notched corners put together, ribbed by poles and sheeted up with boards split from a tree. A puncheon floor, which was split trees, not smoothed-down, was then laid; a hole was then cut in one end and a stick chimney run up. A window two feet square is cut in one end, without any covering. A clapboard door is made with the old-time latch-string. The cabin is then daubed with mud and is ready for occupancy.”

A “one-leg” bed is moved in by the young people. It was made by cutting a stick the proper length, boring holes at one end one and half inches in diameter at right angles, and the same sized holes corresponding with those in the logs of the cabin, the length and breadth desired for the bed, in which are inserted poles.

Upon these poles the clapboards are laid or linn bark is woven back and forth from pole to pole. Upon this foundation the bed is laid.

A cook stove was out of the question, but in lieu of a cook stove the cooking was done in pots and skillets on or about the fireplace. These fireplaces were usually built in chimneys composed of mud and sticks or undressed stone, if any was near at hand. And meals thus prepared were both good and healthful. The outdoor life called for a substantial diet, and it is said that dyspepsia was unheard of in that day.

Before mills had been supplied or were near at hand, the early settlers used what was called hominy blocks for hominy and meal. To make these the early settlers selected a tree about two feet in diameter and felled it to the ground. If a cross-cut saw was in the neighborhood, the end was sawed off smooth, if not, it was smoothed down as best they could with sharp axes, then four or five feet was sawed or cut off square. When this was finished it was raised on end and a hollow cut in the end. This was done with an ax—sometimes a small one used. This done, a fire was built in it and watched carefully till the jagged edges were burned away. When completed, it somewhat resembled a druggist’s mortar. Then a crusher was necessary. It was made from a suitable piece of timber, with an iron wedge attached, the large end down. This completed the hominy crusher and one usually accommodated the neighbors for miles about.

And so with hominy, honey, maple syrup, vegetables and all kinds of game, they could readily satisfy inner man.

Every settler had his truck patch, where he raised potatoes, corn and some vegetables, and if enough corn was raised johnny cake and maple syrup was always appetizing.

The first farms were always opened up in the timber. This was cut down and utilized for cabins, fencing, and what they did not need was rolled together and burned. The saplings and stumps were grubbed up and then plowing begun. Some farmers used a plow made from the fork of a tree, some a wooden mold-board with sometimes an iron point.

The land in the bottoms was very mellow and almost anything would answer for a plow there.

Corn was the principal crop. There was little wheat. Flax stood among the first crops and was one of the necessities. The seed was rarely sold, but the bark was used to make linsey and family linen. Nearly every family had their flax and their sheep for clothing supplies for the family.

The style of dress was in keeping with the style of living. When the women could procure enough calico to make a cap for their head, they were important and happy, or we would say today, very swell, and she who possessed a dress made entirely of store goods was the envy of all her sisters. They usually went barefoot in summer and in inclement weather they wore on their feet shoes made of home-tanned leather. It is said when pioneer woman came into possession of the first calfskin shoes she was very painstaking to preserve them, and when she was going to a wedding or church on state occasions, she would walk barefoot until almost there and then don her pretty shoes.

Very often, 'tis said, the pioneer wore knee breeches on other than state occasions. Buckskin was a favorite for pantaloons, but even buckskin had its draw-

backs. It would shrink, and so the pioneer could go out in his long buckskin trousers, but if he got wet or had to wade a stream, his trousers would begin to climb up until they would reach his knees. On the following day, after they were dry, he would take them out and tie one end to the logs in his house and pull from the other end until he thought them all sufficient, and his buckskins were fully as good as new.

The settlers manufactured and raised nearly everything they used. Once established, they had their own meat, milk and butter. Very little coffee, tea or sugar entered into their menus. High livers had coffee possibly Sunday morning for breakfast. Cattle, sheep and hogs lived on the wild mast, and as there was no market for these, they kept an abundance in the smoke house.

There were few tools and vessels and articles for the household were hewn out of timber, and the family were just as content in their use as the family of today, with the multiplied modern conveniences. Coffee, sugar and tea were high, and they used very little, some families using none, while a cow would only bring about \$10, a horse \$25, a good hog \$1.25; wheat, when they had it, 25c per bushel; honey 20c per gallon and venison hams 25c each, and split rails 25c per hundred. They had to get economy down to the fine point, if anything was hid away in a savings bank for a rainy day. In the remote settlements, the neighbors depended on one another for help, and necessarily so. A house raising would start all the neighbors for a dozen or more miles around, and a new settler was always welcomed and a source of curiosity. The host first cut his logs, hauled

them to his claim, where he was to build his home, and then sent out his announcement of a house-raising and date. It did not take long to put up a cabin, as they came from near and far, and the neighbor who did not come, when he had heard of it, gave real offense. As a rule, there was a jug of whiskey on hand, which, of course, was a requirement to steady the nerves. After the raising, some kind of sport usually followed, which off-balanced all the hard licks they had been putting in, and such was the simple frontier life of the early pioneers.

#### AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS.

For the special benefit of the youth of our county, an interesting comparison might be drawn between the modern conveniences which make the life of our farmer boy a comparatively easy one, and the almost total absence of conveniences of the early day. We will give a short description of the implements and accommodations possessed by the pioneers as handed down to the present generation. And yet the possession of all our conveniences does not silence the voice of complaint, indeed it seems that it fans it to a more consuming flame, for now we are never satisfied, while in "ye olden times" there was little complaint and much real appreciation. The only plows to till the stumpy soil that they at first had was what they styled "bull plows." The moldboards were generally of wood, but sometimes they were half wood and remaining part of iron. The farmer who possessed one of the last named had a prize and was looked upon as an aristocrat.

But, these old "bull plows" did the service, and they must share the honor

with our pioneer forefathers of first turning the sod in old Shelby, as well as in many other counties of the state.

The amount of money spent by the average farmer these days would have kept a whole neighborhood of pioneer fathers in farming implements for a lifetime. He spent little money in such "extravagances," because he had a small income, and could he have obtained our modern, easy riding plows, etc., they were not adapted to the pioneer farming requirements. The "bull plow" was probably better adapted to the stumpy, new land than a sulky plow would have been, and the old-fashioned wheat cradle did better work than would a modern harvester under their circumstances. The prairie was seldom utilized till after the pioneer days, but that portion of the country which was the hardest to cultivate after it was ready appealed to the pioneers. It is well for the country that such was the case, for the present generation, spoiled to the conveniences of the day, would hardly have cleared dense forests and been patient to the slow and trying performances of the old-time relics of pioneer days.

#### FISHING.

All the streams of water abounded in the finny tribe and a large supply of these could be procured on short notice at little expense and labor. There were the philanthropic settlers, who improved the fishing advantages of the country, and would never tire of relating stories of the delicious viands which the streams yielded. Sometimes camping parties, with their paraphernalia repaired to some lucrative spot—perhaps at a great distance. There, as one family, they

would eat, drink and make merry. There was no danger of being ordered off or arrested for trespassing.

One of the shadowy circumstances of a pioneer's life was that of being lonely. The solitude of the primeval forest, with its shadows often deep, hiding the wild

beast and perchance a crafty red man, always oppressed them, and how gladsome were these days of pleasure gatherings and how real and how unfeigned their true joy and fellowship, one with another.