

## CHAPTER IV.

CROPS IN EARLY FORTIES—CHINCH BUG YEAR—THE SIXTEENTH SECTION—GERMAN SETTLEMENT—CHANGE OF COUNTY LINE—MAIL FACILITIES IMPROVED—A FEW THINGS THAT INTERESTED THE SETTLERS—CIVILIZATION'S SURE ADVANCE—SECOND HOMICIDE IN THE COUNTY—THE FIRST COUNTY CONVICTION—JEFFERSON SHELTON—JONATHAN MICHAEL—GEORGE LIGGETT—MISS ALCINA UPTON—STOCK RAISING AND SHIPPING—~~EMIGRANTS~~ EMIGRANTS—ELECTIONS—1840 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION—AUGUST ELECTION, 1841—AUGUST ELECTION, 1844.

HISTORY OF THE COUNTY, 1840 TO 1850—  
CROPS IN EARLY FORTIES.

In 1840 the population of the county enumerated 3,056. After the organization of the county and the building of public buildings advanced, a general influx resulted. The immigrants came not only from Kentucky and other states east and south, but many came from other counties which had been unfortunate in settling or thought Shelby county offered more promising inducements, and crept on over the line. Crops had been good, the soil seemed promising and inviting to those who were willing to toil.

### CHINCH BUG YEAR.

Old settlers long referred to 1842 as chinch bug year. The spring was a late and cold one and much cold rainfall held back the crops. Then came on a scourge of chinch bugs, which drove the people to despair. The wheat and oats crop was a total failure, and the corn was so completely covered with the pest that the rows resembled long black stripes across the fields, and the year

was later referred to by some as the black corn year.

The years 1842-43 were "hard times" for the settlers. Many of them had but recently settled and had not become established. Money was scarce and little in circulation; produce scarce and ridiculously low; and wages on the wane. The market sheet in the fall of 1842 quotes flour, best, per barrel, on St. Louis market, \$2.50 gold and \$3 in "city money." Wheat was 45 cents per bushel, and declined to 35 cents. Potatoes and corn were quoted at 18 cents per bushel. Nice, well-cured hams brought 5 cents per pound. (Think of it!) Tobacco, "firsts," brought only \$3.10 per hundred. Groceries were proportionately cheap. Coffee, 10½ cents per pound; best sugar, 7 cents; molasses, 25 cents per gallon; whisky, 18 cents per gallon by the barrel, or single gallon 25 cents, or 5 cents per pint. To be sure, out of the city market prices were even lower, and in Shelby, a new county, there was little call for produce, making a lower market. Shelbyville quotations were: Pork, \$1.50 per hundred; beef, \$1 per hundred; corn,

62½ cents per barrel or 12½ cents per bushel; bacon, 2 cents per pound. A good five-year-old steer brought a bargain to bring in \$8. Cows sold from \$6 to \$8. There was no market at all for land, except the very best improved. The government had a monopoly on land, receiving \$1.25 per acre for all land entered under the pre-emption law.

#### THE SIXTEENTH SECTION.

After the year of 1840 the sixteenth sections in the congressional townships came into demand, showing the development of the county, and the other sections were invariably taken up first, unless this section was of superior value.

Section 16 was a donation made by congress in every congressional district, for the encouragement and support of the common school. Whenever a majority of the citizens of any such township deemed it best they petitioned the County court to sell that section; the court would make an order to that effect, the land was advertised for sale and sold to the highest bidder. The purchaser was held for bond for the security for the principal and interest.

So long as the interest was paid up he could hold the principal. In keeping with the law, the land could not be disposed of for less than \$1.25 per acre. The interest was paid into a treasury for the support of the schools of the township wherein the district lay, while the principal was retained for a perpetual school fund.

The government also gave to the state, and the state to the county, all the swamp or overflow land in such counties, for school purposes. The County court sold all such holdings belonging to

this county for from \$1.25 to \$10 per acre. The sum aggregating from the sale of swamp land and the sixteenth sections was \$45,663.

#### GERMAN SETTLEMENT.

In 1845 a colony of Germans from Pennsylvania and Ohio arrived in our county and purchased lands north of Shelbyville. Previous to this settlement some few Germans had settled here and there throughout the county, but at this time the colony had planned for a settlement to themselves, and so laid out and established the town of Bethel, which we take up later in the history of Bethel. These progressive people also entered a considerable government land.

#### CHANGE OF COUNTY LINES.

The legislature of 1842-43 altered the boundaries of Shelby county to their present lines, adding twenty-four sections of township 56, range 12, which were taken from Monroe and from a four-mile projection in the southwest portion of the county. The county includes all of townships 59, 58, 57 and the two northern tiers of sections in township 56, lying in ranges 9, 10 and 11 and all of townships 59, 58, 57 and 56 in range 12.

#### MAIL FACILITIES IMPROVED.

In 1844 the mail facilities were improved to a high degree of efficiency. Mail was daily carried in hacks and stages from Hannibal through Palmyra, Shelbyville, Bloomington and on through the county seats westward to St. Joe, when not detained by high water. A daily mail and hack much improved mat-

ters, and they thought they had reached a high degree of perfection.

Rates of postage varied. From the beginning of the postal system in the country to the year 1845 there was a variance of from 6 cents to 25 cents on a half ounce, or less, according to the distance of its destination. For each addition of a half ounce, postage was added. From July 1, 1845, to July 1, 1851, the rates were 5 cents for a half ounce or less if carried less than 300 miles, and 10 cents if carried over that distance. From July, 1851, to October 1, 1883, the rate was uniformly 3 cents for any distance within the United States and less than 3,000 miles.

At an early day a letter to the Pacific coast was charged double postage; while today we send letters to any part of the United States, Cuba, Porto Rica, Guam, the Philippine islands, or republic of Mexico, 2 cents for each ounce or fraction thereof.

#### A FEW THINGS THAT INTERESTED THE SETTLERS.

In the spring of 1844 the heavy rains sent North river out of its banks. Settlers of the day told of its swollen condition, such as had never occurred before and neither has it happened since. All the water beds overflowed and the principal passage fords could not be crossed for several days. In the year 1844 the Mississippi and Missouri overflowed and great damage was done along the bottoms. All the streams of this county were also above bed at that date, and helped to feed the larger streams. In the year of 1844 Daniel Taylor located a tannery on Clear creek, east of Shelbyville (section 18—58—9), below the point

where Miller's mill was later located. This was a good thing for the settlers, making a convenient place to dispose of their hides; but in a few years good tanbark became scarce and hard to obtain, and Mr. Taylor had to throw up the business and the tannery went to destruction. It was a well-chosen spot, with plenty of water, and, had the tanbark held out, would have been a prosperous business for some years, or until the wild animals became scarce.

It was probably the winter of 1844 Mrs. Vannoy, a widow who lived on Salt river, above Walkersville, lost three daughters by drowning in the river. One of them was playing on the ice which broke, letting her down in deep water. The other two daughters ran to her assistance and were drawn from the ice and all three were drowned.

#### CIVILIZATION'S SURE ADVANCE.

During the 40's the county made a forward march in the line of civilization. As settlers came in more numerous than before and the county became more thickly populated, the settlers yearned for a higher stage of development and commenced to take interest in the outside world and in a measure to keep up with the march of civilization. Schools became numerous by 1848, and a public interest was manifested in their behalf. Lodges were organized. In the year of 1847 an Odd Fellows Lodge was organized in Shelbyville and a Masonic Lodge was organized in the same town in 1848. Indeed at this time Shelbyville was the only real town in the county, and she was indeed a prosperous little place, with a good life and vim and was trying to

push forward with all the energy of a modern western town.

In 1849 the county court ordered a fence built about the public square, with Thomas J. Bounds as contractor, and during that year Mr. William H. Vannort planted the square with locust trees and some rose bushes decorated its lawn, which very much improved the seat of justice and added a touch of the esthetic to its former primitive wild appearance.

The farms about the county began to take on a better air. They were under a better state of cultivation and improvement, and the log cabins commenced to fall to the background and comfortable homes were carefully planned and built of lumber and brick. With the appearance of frame and brick homes came the onward march of more careful farming, better barns and granaries and better stock. Up to about this time the stock was comparatively wild, but easterners brought with them eastern modernism and improvements and it was a continual, gradual rise from a stage wholly or quite uncivilized to that of higher civilization as fast as the settlers, with their primitive conveniences and unfortunate trials, which meet everyone who faces the storms of a frontier life, could bring it about.

The experiments of these first men who broke the soil have been succeeded by the permanent and tasteful improvements of their descendants. Upon the spots where they dwelt, toiled, dared and died, are now seen the comfortable home, the thriving village, the school house and the coming of the gospel, and indeed all the appliances of a higher civilization are profusely strewn over the smiling acres of the new county. Organizations

are wide awake and public institutions are bursting into new life everywhere over the fair land.

“Culture’s hand  
Has scattered verdure o’er the land;  
And smiles and fragrance rule serene,  
Where barren wild usurped the scene.”

#### SECOND HOMICIDE IN THE COUNTY.

In 1842, on Christmas day, occurred the second homicide of the county, the killing of one Daniel Thomas by Phillip Upton. The killing occurred in Taylor township, about five miles northwest of Hager’s Grove, where Mr. Upton lived at that time, and his field was the scene of the tragedy. The quarrel grew out of the following circumstances: Mr. Upton was a man of about fifty-five years of age, with a large family, three or four members of which were adult daughters. It seems that Thomas had talked in a damaging manner of one of the daughters, pronouncing her unchaste, with three or four paramours. Peter Greer went to Upton with the story, whereupon a bitter quarrel arose, but finally the chasm was seemingly bridged over and the families agreed to be friends. Thomas, however, had threatened Upton with personal violence. He was a young man, unmarried, and on this Christmas day, armed himself with a pint of whiskey and a pistol, which time and again he loaded with paper wads and fired it off: seemingly for his own entertainment or to celebrate the day. About 9 o’clock he came to the home of Jonathan Michael, where another young man, Jeff Shelton, worked. Michael instructed Shelton to go over to Upton’s for a gun

Upton had to repair for him. Shelton invited Thomas to go with him, and the two went over to Upton's house. Both were told that Upton was out husking shocked corn.

On their way to the field they met two of Upton's daughters, who had been down to the field with their father. A dog accompanied them, which barked furiously at the young men, and to frighten the animal Shelton shot at it with Thomas's pistol. Upton saw the young men coming and started out to meet them. He had his rifle with him, for he never left home without it. Picking up his rifle from a shock of fodder, he leveled it at Thomas and cried out, "Now d—n you, where's your pistol?" and fired. Thomas fell to the ground, shot through the body, and died within two hours in a pile of snow which half covered the body.

Upton surrendered to officials and upon examination before a magistrate was released upon the testimony of his daughters, who swore that when their father shot Thomas, Thomas had first leveled his pistol at their father, but was slow to draw the trigger, which gave Upton, who was a practical expert, the better chance of killing. In a few months Upton removed to Adair county.

#### THE FIRST COUNTY CONVICTION.

The September term of 1843 Shelby County Circuit court, he was indicted and later arrested. This trial came off at a special term of court, which convened July 12, 1844, at Shelbyville, with Judge McBride to try him. The jury of the case was composed of Anthony Gooch, John Gullett, Albert G. Smith, James A. Sherry, Jonathan Rogers, Charles Dun-

can, Samuel Blackburn, James E. Utz, Robert K. Mayes, Thomas B. Mayes and James Davis. The prisoner was ably defended by Hon. Samuel T. Glover and Hon. J. R. Abernathy; the circuit attorney was the prosecutor. The trial lasted two days, and on the second day the jury returned a verdict of "Guilty of manslaughter of the second degree." The jury could not agree on his sentence and the judge fixed it at three years' imprisonment. They proceeded to appeal the case to the Supreme Court, but it never came to a head. He was pardoned by Governor Edwards after serving two-thirds of his term.

In the meantime the family had moved to Putnam county, to which place the old man went. In a short time, however, he became involved with his son-in-law, a man by the name of Cain. Later on, one day when Upton was working in the wood, chopping out a trough from the huge trunk of a tree, while his wife and daughter were washing on the river brink, Upton was bushwhacked by Cain, who stole stealthily through the brush upon him and fatally shot him with his rifle. He was shot in the same part of the body as he had shot Thomas and lived about the same length of time before death ensued. Cain fled for California, but at St. Joseph he and a desperado quarreled and Cain was killed. Then a mob arose and slew the desperado, and so "the wily man shall fall as by his own hand." Some of the most important abstracts from the trial of Upton follow:

#### JEFFERSON SHELTON.

Was hired to work at Jonathan Michael's. On Christmas morning he

came to said Michael's house; witness had to water the horses that morning; said Thomas also had to water his own horse. Michael asked witness to go to Philip Upton's for a gun which Upton had to fix; told witness to ask Upton if the gun was fixed, if not to bring it away. Witness and Thomas went and watered the horses. Thomas told witness to hasten back from Upton's and they would go together to Mr. Foreman's; witness asked Thomas to go with him to Upton's; Thomas went with him. When they got there witness asked Mrs. Upton about the gun lock; she said that Mr. Upton was in the field, to go and see him; we walked out of the house and witness proposed to Thomas to go straight back to Michael's; but Thomas opposed it by saying they should go and see about the gun lock; witness said it was not worth while and they ought to go and take the horses back; Thomas then said if witness would go to the field where Upton was he, Thomas, would go back with witness and help drive the horses up; witness agreed to go with Thomas to the field where Upton was; as they went along from the house they met two Miss Uptons, daughters of the prisoner, riding on horseback, coming out of the field; "a dog that was with the girls kept barking at us"; Thomas had a pistol, with which he had been shooting paper wads, and witness took the weapon and shot at the dog to scare him; "also shook my coat tail at the dog. We went on to near where Upton was; the pistol was loaded with paper and powder; I saw it loaded; as we went up Thomas says, 'I think Mr. Upton has a horse hitched there.' Upton came from

where he was in the fields toward us, and when he was about ten or fifteen feet from us, he stooped down and picked up a gun that was lying on the ground, and then said to Thomas, 'Now, damn you, where is your pistol?' and fired"; Thomas fell and witness picked him up; Upton came near with his gun and witness thought he would strike him with it; witness put Thomas's cap under his head and went for help. Upton stepped before witness with his gun drawn; witness changed his course and Upton again got before him; witness then ran off to the fence. "The place where Upton shot Thomas was about half way between the place we first saw him and the fence"; witness looked back after he got over the fence and saw Upton with his gun down as if reloading it. On the Sunday previous to the shooting witness was at Upton's and Thomas was there; Thomas and Upton talked; witness had never heard of any difference and thought they were friendly. Thomas was shot on Christmas, died of the wound in about three-quarters of an hour; the ball entered the left side.

Cross-examined, witness said it was between 10 and 11 o'clock in the morning that they went to water the horses; that nothing was said about Thomas's going to Upton's with him until after the horses were watered; witness did not remember of Thomas saying, just as they were leaving Upton's house, "Let's go up to the field and fix the d—d old rascal"; that he never heard Thomas threaten nor abuse Upton; that Thomas once told him that Upton had forbidden him (Thomas) to go on his (Upton's) place; that Thomas prevailed on him to

go up to where Upton was in the field; by telling him he would go back with him and help him to drive the horses up; that the road by which they left Upton's house forked after going a little distance, one fork leading to Michael's, the other leading up in the field where Upton was; that he said to Thomas, "Hello, Thomas, where are you going?" to which Thomas said, "O, I have took the wrong road"; that Thomas then came across to the road witness was in; that they looked across the field and saw the girls they had met running up the patch to where Upton was; that they had a little talk together and concluded to go back where Upton was; that nothing was said in the conversation about Upton; that Thomas wanted to go up there and they concluded to go; that witness did not strike nor strike at Upton; that he did not see Thomas in the act of drawing a pistol when Upton shot him; that he was not looking at Thomas at the time, but was looking at Upton; that, as far as he saw, Thomas gave Upton no provocation whatever; that when witness came back to the field with help the pistol was found in Thomas's breast coat pocket; that he did not know whether Thomas had the pistol in his hand when shot or not; that Thomas turned and walked five or six steps before he fell. (The witness also swore that soon after the killing he left the county and went over into Monroe; but that his leaving was not for fear of Upton, but to go to school. Afterward, however, in private conversation, he admitted that the principal reason why he did leave was that he feared Upton would kill him, as he was the principal witness against him.)

## JONATHAN MICHAEL.

On Christmas morning, 1842, Daniel Thomas and Jefferson Shelton were at his house; the latter was hired for the year, with the privilege to quit at the end of any month on notice; witness asked Shelton to go to Upton's and "get my gun." Shelton asked Thomas to go with him; they were at the house before they went to water the horses; the next witness saw of Thomas he was lying nearly dead in Upton's field; Thomas lived an hour or an hour and a half after witness saw him. Upton did not go off after shooting Thomas, but remained from three to four months in the county, then moved with his family to Macon (Adair), where he resided until arrested.

Cross-examined: Immediately after Thomas's death Shelton became dejected and depressed in mind and seemed exceedingly unhappy; he said that he was afraid if he stayed about there Upton would kill him, as he was the only witness against him.

For the defense several witnesses testified to Upton's quiet, peaceable character. One witness said: "He is a peaceable man until you get him roused."

## GEORGE LIGGETT.

In September or October, just before Thomas was killed, witness had a conversation with Thomas; this was the first time witness had ever seen Thomas; they were passing by Upton's and witness asked Thomas who lived there and Thomas said: "Old Phil Upton"; said I would find him out soon enough; that the whole of 'em were "a d—n onery pack"; witness said, "How?" Thomas

said "every way"; Thomas asked me what would be the consequence if he were to catch a man out and beat him nearly to death—what would be the law; I told him I did not know the laws of the state; told him it might be a dangerous thing to attempt; asked him how big a man Upton was; I said he might get the advantage of him; Thomas said he was not afraid of that and laid his hand on his breeches pocket and said, "I have something here in that case"; said he had a pistol for him; besides, Thomas said he intended to have a man by to help. Sometime after this witness told Upton what Thomas had said.

MISS ALCINA UPTON.

On Christmas morning, witness and her little sister had been up in the field with her father and had returned nearly to the house; as they came up nearly to the house, Jefferson Shelton and Thomas were standing by the corner of the house talking. She heard Thomas say to Shelton, "Jeff, let's go up to the field and fix that d—d old rascal"; they passed along the road with that, and she and her little sister turned and followed them; they went a little way up the road and Jefferson Shelton shot a pistol off at their dog that was coming down the road; witness and her sister passed on at the forks of the road; one of the roads went by Michael's, the other passed where her father was in the field; when Shelton and Thomas came to the forks one took the road to Michael's, then the other one started over and started toward Michael's. Witness swore that after she passed the forks of the road she looked back and saw Shelton and Thomas stand-

ing face to face talking, and that they turned and got on a log and looked toward the field. When witness got up to her father her little sister was telling him what they had done and said; that her father said nothing, but turned and walked toward the men; that Shelton and Thomas came up, one on the right, the other on the left, and that Thomas had his hand on a pistol which was partly drawn from his breeches pocket; that Shelton struck at her father just as he got to his gun; that her father picked up the gun, stepped back and shot Thomas, then turned and struck Shelton with the gun; that the gun knocked Shelton's hat off and that he picked it up and ran; then her father went to the house; witness did not know why her father took his gun to the field with him; that he went to the field about 9 o'clock in the morning.

Peter Greer swore that Thomas made to him the damaging statements affecting Miss Upton's character before referred to; that he (Greer) had told Mr. Upton what Thomas had said. Mr. Greer also stated he arrested Upton at home without difficulty; that he went up late at night and found Upton lying before the fire fast asleep.

Greer hailed, was invited in, and told him: "Upton, you will have to go with me." "Certainly; I will go with you anywhere," was Upton's response.

Lewis Scobee testified he saw Thomas pick up a fire stick at Michael's once and remark, "I'd like to get a lick at old Phil Upton's head with this, the d—d old —." Thomas also said: "I intend to devil and aggravate him until he leaves the country."

## STOCK RAISING AND SHIPPING.

As previously stated, farming and stock raising was taking a prominence in Shelby county in the 40's and taking on some proportions as a business. From 1844 the farmers of the county engaged in stock raising and breeding, while others turned their attention to buying and shipping. Russell Moss and Barton W. Hall had each imported some fine breeds of hogs and others had imported the merino and other fine breeds of sheep.

Henry Louthan and Parsons went into the stock business on a large scale and both raised and bought stock. Pork packers from Palmyra and Hannibal came into the county and monopolized the market and bought all the pork at their own prices. Mr. Holliday, in his history written and printed in some of the newspapers found on the old files, says they graded the prices so that hogs weighing 200 lbs. or more would bring in about \$5; a porker weighing 198, he would be graded to bring \$4.75; if he weighed 150 lbs., he would bring \$1.50; but no matter how much over 200 lbs. of meat they got they only paid the \$5, and beef was similarly graded, being about \$25 per head.

Mr. Holliday goes on to say that the farmers sometimes revolted against the "steal" or "starvation prices" they then termed them, under the grading system, and launched out on their own hook. Mr. J. B. Marmaduke had two very fine steers, which weighed 1,800 lbs. each, and he tried to sell them on the foot at home. The best offer he could find was \$30 per head. He vehemently refused the price and proceeded to demonstrate what he could do. He sent them to Han-

nibal, had them slaughtered, packed and shipped. His agent sent him a return of his sales, which, when the accounts were balanced, left him \$8 liabilities after taking both of his steers in his assets. Mr. Marmaduke also shipped a heavy crop of navy beans and Mr. Vandeventer a good crop of wheat with about the same success.

The wheat crop dwindled in value and importance after 1842 for some years thereafter, and then came to be looked upon as uncertain, yet good crops were often harvested, especially so on new lands. The price of hemp, which was a good yield, became so low that the farmers abandoned it for tobacco, which became a popular industry and always brought a cash price, though prices varied and were sometimes low.

## THE FIRST JAIL.

In the year of 1846 was Shelby county's first jail erected. Offenders of the law, she had many before this date, as the records show, but the county had been on a strain in the rapid march of improvement, that she had found plenty of places for investments, she considered better made and considered it wiser and cheaper to board out her convicts than to build and maintain a building for their accommodation, but May, 1846, marks the date for a new jail in which prisoners could be kept at home. The first prison was built on the same site as the present one, just north of the court house, on the north side of the public square. The contract was let to Russell W. Moss, and William Gooch was the commissioner. Following is the plan of the first prison house :

The material was of hewed logs, twelve

inches square and eighteen feet high, with cracks between not more than one and one-half inches wide. The sleepers, or lower wall, was laid with logs the same as the top and sides, and the floor was laid with two-inch oak plank, well spiked down. There were no windows in the lower part, called "the dungeon," except holes 12x18 inches on the east, north and south sides, which were secured by iron grates. Then there were logs twenty feet long of the same size built around the dungeon and seven feet higher, which made a room eighteen feet square. The space between the outer and inner walls was filled with limestone broken into pieces the size of apples. There were steps to go upon the outside of the building to a door which entered the upper story; then a trap door, by means of which the dungeon was reached. The floor of the upper room was similar to the dungeon floor. The old-timers called the upper room the debtors' prison, while the lower was consigned to criminals. The jail cost about \$600. In sketches by Mr. Holliday is handed down the following jotting: At that time there was a law in Missouri providing that a creditor might put a debtor into prison and keep him there until the last farthing was paid, or until he had given up all property he owned under oath, when he was relieved under what is termed the "Act for the benefit of insolvent debtors." This was why we had a debtor's prison. The outside of the jail was weather-boarded and looked like a common frame house.

The act, however, of abolishing the act of imprisonment for debt was abolished in Missouri when an enactment was

passed by our legislature in January, 1843, setting such a law as null and void.

Mr. Holliday also says: Among the first prisoners placed in our new jail were two brothers from Schuyler county, who were charged with stealing hogs. Joshua M. Ennis was sheriff at the time and his father kept the jail.

He gave the prisoners their meals through the trap door. The weather was not very cold, yet they complained of its severity, and the jailer had a stove put in the jail for their special comfort.

Several times, upon opening the trap door, he discovered the lower room full of smoke. When he inquired of the prisoners if they were not uncomfortable on account of the smoke, they replied, "Oh, no; the smoke all rises upward, so we don't feel it down here." One morning Mr. Ennis made his regular visit to the jail with his prisoners' breakfast, but was astonished to find that the birds had flown. Further discoveries showed that they had burned a hole through the floor and wall and made their escape. They were polite enough to leave a letter directed to the sheriff, in which they said he had treated them well, and that they liked their boarding house, but that their business needed their immediate personal attention so much that they were compelled to leave; if, however, they had occasion to stop in town at any future time they would stop with him. The court had the house repaired and in a short time another hole was made in the same place by an escaping prisoner, when the court, finding the jail unfit for any further use, sold it and had it removed.

## CALIFORNIA EMIGRANTS.

Doubtless the desire for gold has ever been the mainspring of all enterprise and progress from the days of the patriarchs up to the present time, and will continue so to be to the remote ages. Generally, however, this greed has been evident in all the busy thoroughfares of thrift and industry. On some occasions, however, it has passed beyond the bounds of reason, and assumed the characteristics of a mania. The gold fever broke out in the latter part of 1848, when the stories commenced to float about the wonderful riches of the placer mines of California, and worked into a frenzy, not only the people of the West, but the entire republic.

The excitement grew daily, and the reports were repeated, exaggerated, from mouth to mouth and from settlement to settlement, until nothing was talked of but the feats of the California gold diggers. The papers were replete, each one picturing more graphically the details of the yellow dirt, its marvelous richness and its vast territory.

The excitement ran so high that the most conservative were infected with the contagion, hurriedly left their homes and all that was dear to them to battle with the uncertainties of hunting gold. Day after day and month after month, these early settlers watched daily the papers to read their fabulous tales of the western gold fields, and instead of dying out the fever rose higher and higher, and it is said, at one time, there was not an able-bodied man in Shelby county but contemplated and planned a trip for later on in the spring or summer, for even the most sober and stable minded

could not repel the temptation, so hemmed in on all sides was he by the one topic and desire, and the stream of emigrants ever passing on every side and in conditions of travel. Some of the emigrant wagons were drawn by cows, while others footed it through, drawing a hand cart which carted their clothes and hard-boiled eggs and corn dodgers. Only to get to California and all riches would be at their feet.

It was a scene beyond description. One continuous line of wagons and footmen, from the Orient to the Occident, one continuous line and like a cantankerous tumor, drawing and pulling from every highway to the main thoroughfare, the road to California. Ho! to California! Shelby county, new as she was, was caught in the whirlwind and turned to face the hardships of the crowded frontier of the gold fields. They started out at the beginning, but the main emigration commenced in 1850. Some of them made great sacrifice to obtain the necessary outfit, and most often it was a disastrous investment, for to the average, the investor did not find "pay dirt" and many never succeeded in reaching home again. The suffering was great, because of the congested conditions, and some who went from here found no peace until they lay down to sleep—never to return to all that earth held near and dear to them. Some of the luckier ones made comfortable little fortunes and were able to return to their loved ones with nuggets of gold for their hire.

Among those from Shelby county who went out in 1849 were: John F. Benjamin, J. M. Collier, William Dunn, John Dickerson, Capt. J. A. Carothers, Dr. Mills, C. M. Pilcher, Benjamin Forman,

“Bob” Marmaduke (slave), Calvin Pilcher, William Robinson, Charles Rackliffe, Lafayette Shoots, “Joe” Dunn (slave), William, John and Robert Montgomery.

Among those who listed in **1850** were Adam Heckart and Newton and Robert Dunn.

#### AUGUST ELECTION, 1841.

Clerk of Courts—Thomas J. Bounds, **224**; John Jacobs, **198**.

Assessor—Abraham Mattock, **163**; Alfred Tobin, **130**; Joseph C. Miller, **71**; George W. Gentry, **44**.

At this election there were five townships in the county, Black Creek, North River, Salt River, Jackson and Tiger Fork.

#### ELECTIONS—1840 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

At the Presidential election in **1840** a full vote was cast and in the county it was a close vote. The Van Buren or Democratic electors received **233** votes; the Harrison or Whig electors, **226**; Democratic majority, **7**.

The political campaign this year was, perhaps, the most remarkable one in the history of the country. The greatest enthusiasm was awakened in the Whig ranks for their candidates, General Harrison and John Tyler—“Tippecanoe and Tyler, too”—and they swept the country against democracy. In this county about the first political enthusiasm came of this year, being held by both parties at Shelbyville and also at Oak Dale. In **1840** there were six townships in the county, Black Creek, North River, Salt River, Fabius, Tiger Fork and Jackson.

#### AUGUST ELECTION, 1844.

Governor—John C. Edwards (Dem.), **245**; C. H. Allen. (Ind. Dem. and Whig), **173**.

Congressmen—(Five to be chosen). Regular Dems. or “Hards”: Sterling Price, **231**; John G. Jamison, **229**; John S. Phelps, **229**; James B. Bowling, **232**; James H. Relfe, **234**; Ind. Dems. or “Softs”: L. H. Sims, **178**; T. B. Hudson, **185**; Ratcliffe Boone, **186**; John Thornton, **182**; Augustus Jones, **180**; Josiah Fisk, **5**.

At this time the Democratic party in Missouri was divided into two factions, the “Hards,” who favored hard money or state bank money on a metallic basis and no bills less than **\$10**. The “Softs” favored bank bills of **\$1, \$2, \$3, \$4, \$5**, and leaned toward the Whig idea of free banking.

Senator—Robert Croughton (Dem.), **221**; Addison J. Reese (Whig), **227**.

Representatives—Russell W. Moss, **254**; John W. Long, **249**.

Sheriff—Gilbert H. Edmonds, **296**; William J. Holliday, **209**.

County Judges—S. B. Hardy, **292**; John Dunn, **229**; James Foley, **222**; Perry B. Moore, **175**; Thomas Lane, **147**; Abraham Vandiver, **145**; Robert Givens, **94**; Levy Brown, **87**; Thomas O. Eskridge, **57**; Alexander Gillaspay, **49**.

Assessor—William H. Vannort elected.

Coroner—James Patterson elected.

C. H. Allen lived at Palmyra and was an eccentric character, with a personality quite his own, and was commonly known as “Horse” Allen. He was a lawyer of noted repute, having served a term or two as circuit judge. At one time, it is told, when presiding over

court he had to contend with an attorney small in stature and of the chatterbox style, and at last he exclaimed: "I'll let you know I am not only judge of this court but a 'hoss' besides, and if you don't sit down and keep your mouth shut, by — I'll make you!" This year he made the race for governor on the Independent ticket against Judge Edwards, but was defeated by a majority of **5,621**, the vote standing: Edwards, **36,978**; Allen, **31,357**.

At the Presidential election in **1844** the vote of the county stood for Henry Clay and Theodore Frelinghuysen (Whigs), **244**; for James E. Polk and George M. Dallas (Dems.), **209**. Whig majority, **35**.

At the Presidential election in **1848** the

vote was : For Cass and Butler (Dems.), **263**; for Taylor and Fillmore (Whigs), **175**. Democratic majority, **88**. John McAfee, Democrat, was elected to the legislature.

In the legislature in **1847** Mr. McAfee in the floor discussion on the "Jackson resolutions," the member from Shelby supported the resolutions, being a strong anti-Benton man. The next year, when he was a candidate for re-election, he was defeated by John F. Benjamin, who had first returned from California. Mr. Benjamin was brought out by a faction of Democrats led by J. M. Ennis, and was both an anti-Benton man and an anti-Jackson Resolution.