THIS IS
WASHINGTON
COUNTY

1818-1968
Illinois Sesquicentennial
THIS IS WASHINGTON COUNTY
(Its First 150 Years – 1818-1968)

Published by the Sesquicentennial Committee of the Historical Society of Washington County, Illinois

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Appreciation: The editors wish to take the opportunity to sincerely thank the many, many people who have helped compile this book. You have all been wonderful, with your time, help, suggestions, contributions. We thank each and everyone of you!

The perfect history is yet to be written. An editor cannot trust to myths, legends, or traditions, but must rely on facts. There are instances when even facts are clouded and obscure. All that remains is conjecture.

In compiling this book research has been as thorough as conditions and time warrant. Oftentimes the facts are pinned down to the point of happening, true, authentic, statistical. But there are statements, dates, names, that are not this factual. The editors have sifted through yellowed papers, old records, for long, long hours. Family trees, interviews with aged citizens, and various other sources have been resorted to, to bring you this compilation of Washington County history that began long before record-keeping was the precise thing it is today. So if there are vague passages, debatable dates, or other inaccuracies, we beg your indulgence. The perfect history, we’ll repeat, has never been written.

The Editors
Washington Countians Are Also “Egyptians”

There is no question that Washington County is part of that symbolical area of southern Illinois called “Egypt.” The name, used as early as 1843, is voiced with pride by most southern Illinoisans, but in the northern part of the state, it is somehow looked down upon, as our own personal Appalachia.

The exact boundaries of Egypt are in dispute. But most southern Illinoisans will settle for that part of the state lying south of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which runs east from St. Louis, Mo. to Vincennes, Ind.

Figuratively, Egypt would be the southernmost quarter of the state, that hilly, coal-mine-eroded region that is also rich in history. People are friendly in this grassroots society.

Perhaps the origin of the name will always remain a puzzle. There are as many as four versions:

Egypt takes its name from the location of such old world cities as Cairo, Memphis, Thebes, Palestine and Karnak.

The area bears a marked resemblance to the Nile’s delta.

The name originated in the folklore and illiteracy of the inhabitants, or possibly because at one time southern Illinois supplied corn to the rest of the state during a severe crop blight, playing good Samaritan to much of the upstate.

A clash of dates discrredits the first reason entirely. Cairo was not established until 1837, Thebes until 1844 (even then it was known as Sparhawk’s Landing). Karnak also is far from a “very old” town. Allegation to the word, Egypt, appears as early as 1843, long before the influx of settlers at any of these places.

Point two: Alleged similiarity between southern Illinois and the Nile’s delta is totally absurd! The Nile delta is at least 150 miles long, 120 miles wide. The alluvial “tip” of southern Illinois called Egypt extends for only 25 or 30 miles northward from Birds’ Point at Cairo, the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The rest of the area (northward) is rugged, hilly, an outcropping of the Missouri-Arkansas Ozark chain of hogback hills, and bears no resemblance to the Delta country.

Point Three: No southern Illinoisan will permit the allegation that the name originated from “the intellectual darkness” of the inhabitants, or the folklore of a backwoods area. Southern Illinois had institution of learning well in advance of northern Illinois. For instance, John Mason Peck founded his Rock Spring Seminary near Belleville in 1827. Four years later it moved to the Alton community to become Shurtleff College, McKendree College, aged Methodist institution of learning at Lebanon, was established in 1828. Vandalia had the first historical society in the state. We were not as “backwoodsy” as some would have us believe!

John W. Allen of Carbondale, southern Illinois’ dean of historians, writing in the Chicago Schools Journal in 1955, cited earlier and more detailed testimony. Allen’s source was A. D. Duff, prominent lawyer and judge of southern Illinois, who contributed an article on the origin of Egypt to the Shawnetown Gazette in the 1860’s. According to Duff, the very long and severe winter of the “deep snow,” (1830-31), delayed planting. The following summer was cool, and a killing frost came early in September. The corn crop in central Illinois was a complete failure. The settlers needed corn for feed, for seed, and for the corn-bread that was staple fare. They resorted to the southern part of the state, where the crop had matured. As a boy living on a main road in Bond County, Duff said that in the Spring of 1832 he saw many wagons coming south empty and going back loaded with corn. These people were Bible readers, and were reminded of the sons of Jacob resorting to Egypt for grain.

The Biblical reference is to the famine that struck the Mediterranean world while the tribe of Jacob resided in Canaan. Hearing of their plight, Jacob’s son, Joseph, who held a high place in Pharaoh’s court, sent money and raiment and “ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and meat,” so Jacob could lead his people to Egypt and eat “the fat of the land.” If you care to check, you’ll find all of this related in chapter 45 of the Book of Genesis in your Bible.

The baleful effects of the winter of 1830-31 in all but southern Illinois is a matter of historical record. Whether or not you accept the above as an explanation as to why Washington Countians live in Egypt (without the pyramids), please don’t say “Little Egypt.” Little Egypt was a fiery belly-dancer at the World’s Columbian Exposition at Chicago, and has no reference to the geographical Egypt of which southern Illinoisans are justly proud.
There is a "new face" in Illinois today, and it is found in Egypt, of which Washington County is a part. One of the finest shrines in America is the Bald Knob Cross at Alto Pass, shown here.
Washington County as a Territory

Today most of us think of our home county in terms of the present, as it is today, but turning back the pages of the history books, Washington County has quite a longevity record. For instance:

1673 — Claimed as a French possession under military rule.

1721 — Civil administration as part of French Louisiana.

1763 — British sovereignty, part of the Western Wilderness Territory, military rule.

1774 — British military rule, Province of Quebec.

1778 — July 4 — Proclaimed part of Illinois Country of Virginia, civil and military authorities appointed by Gov. Patrick Henry.

1773 — Ceded by Virginia to the thirteen colonies in common, still unorganized territory.


1795 — Mostly part of Randolph County, a small part of St. Clair County, Indiana Territory, U.S.A.

1800 — Part of St. Clair County, Illinois Territory.

1818 — Made a separate county of State (Washington), including all of Clinton County, Illinois.

1824 — December 23 — Clinton County separated, and Washington County began its existence in its present form.
OCTAGONAL ODDITY IN THE COUNTY

Southern Illinois has several round (or octagonal) buildings of more or less fame, including Randolph County's historic octagonal schoolhouse, and a round barn in Marion County near Kell that once was used as a marker in early-day aviation. But perhaps the most unusual of all is the old octagonal house on the outskirts of Richview. As this is written, it was ready to be razed; perhaps by the time this sees print, it will be gone.

One could go quietly mad, tracing the intricacies of this old house. It has a somber, haunted look that no doubt would raise even the critical eyebrows of Alfred Hitchcock, if he espied it.

The house is the only "round" residence in the area. It is believed to have been built in 1871 by a man named Cooper. If his neighbors thought the unconventional builder had lost his marbles, they could have been right, for later he did commit suicide in the strange house he built.

It seems the original octagonal house was the idea of an eastern phrenologist, Orson Squire Fowler, back in 1851. Fowler pointed out to his critics that eight walls in the form of an octagon will enclose more space than four walls of the same length, at right angles, plus better ventilation and lighting.

It is known that the Richview house was closely patterned after Fowler's ideas, even to the solid outside walls which were originally to have been covered with stucco. At one time the house also had a two-story porch.

One interesting feature of this octagonal house plan was that one could enter any room with or without the use of the center hall. Upstairs, the four main rooms were narrowed somewhat, to make the two triangular rooms larger.

A full, deep fieldstone cellar was under the house, and neighbors said it at one time served as a garage for the owner's one-cylinder Reo automobile, one of the first horseless carriages in Richview.

Back in the gingerbread era of Fowler's day, he was listed as a spellbinding crackpot who also wrote a book, "Sexual Science," a frank marriage manual of no less than 930 pages that really lifted the roof off the literary world at that time for its frankness. Putting into practice his theories on promoting sexual vigor, Fowler married three times, fathering three children when he was past 70.

Washington County's only "round" house, once the pride of Richview.

It's a bit sad to think that such an area monument to architectural genius is going the way of all old houses, but such is the case. There is no incentive to restore it.

If ever a house had an "eight-sided rumpus room," this was it!
THE TURBULENT TWENTIES

The violent chapter in American lawlessness that induced author Paul M. Angle to write his sensational bestseller, “Bloody Williamson,” a true, painstakingly researched saga of southern Illinois violence, did not entirely escape Washington County in spewing its death and mayhem.

A front page story in the St. Louis Globe Democrat, dated May 22, 1921, tells in detail of the ambush of Ku Klux Klan chief, S. Glenn Young and his wife, enroute to East St. Louis in the big Lincoln car that had become almost as well known as he was.

As he entered the lonely road through the Kaskaskia bottoms, west of Venedy Station, a Dodge that had been following him started to pass on the left. When it drew abreast, its occupants poured a volley of shots into the Lincoln. Mrs. Young slumped forward. Young skidded to a stop and jumped from the car attempting to fire at the speeding Dodge. Instead, he collapsed. He had been hit in the knee, and one leg was useless. In a short time a passing motorist found the wounded couple and took Mrs. Young to St. Elizabeth’s Hospital at Belleville. Young followed in his car, with an unnamed man driving. Mrs. Young, hit in the face by shotgun pellets, lost the sight of one eye. Young had a shattered knee.

The second violence in Washington County. came to public attention on the morning of February 5, 1927, when a farmer walking across a field near DuBois, inside Washington County borders, came across a partly clothed body. Several bullet holes were visible. The man was Lory Price, state highway patrolman. Later the body of the patrolman’s wife, Ethel Price, was found in an abandoned mine shaft.

This violence, in and near our county borders, was the result of an era of lawlessness that started in the Williamson County coal field, back in September, 1921, when the Southern Illinois Coal Company opened a strip mine there. A miners’ strike, and the importation of strike breakers resulted in the Herrin Massacre on June 22, 1922, when nineteen men were killed and one fatally wounded.

On May 20, 1923, the Ku Klux Klan made its first public appearance at Marion. A gathering of 2000 Klansmen, initiated two hundred candidates at a ceremony held in a nearby field. On November 1, 1923, S. Glenn Young, hired by the Klan to take charge of its law-enforcement program in southern Illinois, arrived in Williamson County. Bootlegging raids started, with more violence, pistol-whippings and death, with new hoodlum faces on the scene almost daily. A gang war was soon underway, with such familiar names as Art Newman, Charlie Birger, the machine-gun-toting Young, and dozens of others making the headlines as violence erupted over a wide area.

Armed men, bombings, killings, roadhouse raids, gang against gang, turned Herrin and Marion into armed camps. Joe Adams, mayor of nearby West City, was murdered. Shady Rest, a hangout for the Birger gang, was bombed. Four bodies were found in the ruins. Carl, Earl and Bernie Shelton were sentenced to 25 years in the federal penitentiary for mail robbery.

Charlie Birger was arrested and charged with the murder of Mayor Joe Adams. With Art Newman and Ray Hyland, Birger’s trial opened at Benton on July 6, 1927. The jury found the three defendants guilty and decreed death for Birger, life imprisonment for Newman and Hyland. Birger’s hanging was delayed by a stay of execution by the Supreme Court. On October 21, 1927, another hoodlum named Rado Millich was hanged in the jailyard at Marion.

The Supreme Court denied Birger’s appeal for a new trial. The Illinois Board of Pardons and Paroles refused to intercede as well. Birger, accordingly, was hanged in the jailyard at Benton on April 19, 1928. Looking up at the sky the budding trees, his last words were, “It’s a beautiful world.”

Conclusion: S. Glenn Young and three of his henchmen were killed in a gunfight at Herrin on January 21, 1925. Carl Shelton was killed on his farm near Fairfield on October 23, 1917. Connie Ritter died in the Menard penitentiary on January 6, 1943. Bernie Shelton was killed in front of his tavern, near Peoria, on July 26, 1943. Earl Shelton was shot but recovered. On June 7, 1950, Roy Shelton was shot to death on his tractor at his Wayne County Farm. A score of lesser hoodlums met their death before the carnage ended.

The depression that followed the stock market crash of 1929 accelerated the reign of terror, already under way, in Williamson County. It lasted for more than twenty-five years.

With the exception of the two incidents mentioned above, Washington County escaped this feud and carnage. However, many a senior citizen here today remembers the many instances when Charlie Birger, S. Glenn Young, Art Newman, and later the Sheltons were seen inside county borders, perhaps eating lunch or having a car serviced at a county garage. The guns were there, but they were never used.
HIGH AND LOW SPOT IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

When this writer was in his teens, and the road from Okawville to Nashville was dirt (or mud) instead of concrete, there is a distinct rememberance of the remains of an old coal mine on a slope midway between Addieville and the county seat, always pointed out as “highest spot in the county.” This supposition is in error according to the Coast and Geodetic Survey, which goes to show that an image, planted long enough in the human brain, at last becomes “truth.”

That government bureau noted for its faetual accuracy in measuring the terrain of the United States, reveals that the highest spot in Washington County is near the Fairview Church, on the north edge of DuBois township, alongside Route 51, about three miles south of the Ashley Wye. The elevation here is a fraction above 591 feet, according to a recent survey.

The second highest spot in the county is on the Harold Auld farm, west of Oakdale, where the elevation is 583 feet above sea level. The site is known as “Auld’s Hill.”

The lowest spot in the county is a body of water known as Calamus Lake, famous for its annual parade of lilies, located in the Kaskaskia Bottoms, about two miles southwest of Venedy Station. The elevation here is 395 feet.

We don’t have any mountains in Washington County, as all natives well realize, but we do have a topography variance of 196 feet, which is ample assurance that most of the rainfall in the county eventually drains into either the Kaskaskia or the Little Muddy Rivers.
Wood Tavern at Nashville Was 1822 Hostelry

Without doubt many of the early records of Washington County were lost in the fire that destroyed the courthouse in 1883, if indeed such records ever existed. For instance, the only reliable history of Washington County extant, published before that time, makes no mention at all of the old “Half-Way House,” later known as the Wood Tavern, located on the old Shawneetown-St. Louis trace back when the city of Nashville was only a figment of the imagination in the minds of a bevy of terribly-agitated county commissioners. Yet the old tavern stood in the northwestern part of Nashville until 1952, when it was razed.

Nor does this same history volume mention—except in a fragmentary way—the owner and builder of the tavern, Major John D. Wood, one of the keenest, most enterprising businessmen in the county at that time. Today, Wood’s tombstone lies neglected about a hundred feet west of where the old building stood.

The old Wood Tavern, until it was torn down 15 years ago, was believed to be one of the oldest public buildings in the county, if indeed not the oldest along the entire Shawneetown-St. Louis trace. It deserved a better fate than it got.

In the 1820’s, and for about ten years afterward, the Shawneetown-St. Louis trace was the main east-west artery across the new state of Illinois. Its exact location in Nashville apparently is lost.

Suffice it is to say it was somewhere north of the Courthouse square, to eliminate the hill on which the business part of the city stands. This accounts for the location of the old tavern, about two blocks north of Route 460.

During that time it was the rendezvous and meeting place of politicians of every shade and leaning, of every party, for Wood was too keen a businessman to dip into the affairs of his guests.

It was said, but cannot be verified, that on one or two occasions during those four agonizing years without a courthouse, court was held within the walls of the tavern. It was the stopping place of circuit-riding lawyers and preachers, and of the riders of the pony express.

Dramatists have tried to weave into the story a bit of fiction that Abe Lincoln was a guest at the old
tavern one night. However, as far as this researcher can ascertain, there is little truth to the belief.

John D. Wood came to Washington County in 1821, in his twenty-first year. In common with most settlers of that period he "squatted" on a piece of government land, built his habitation, took his own sweet time about "proving up" on his holdings. According to the available records he did not establish title until eleven years had passed.

In the meanwhile the inference is that the home he built was a half-way house, probably in 1822 or 1823. He opened it up for business as soon as the roof was on. For a year or so he farmed as a sideline but gradually worked up a real estate business.

The next ten years were the golden age for the tavern. But when the surveyors laid out the city of Nashville, they evidently disregarded the old Shawnee-town trace's meanderings, placed the courthouse square at the top of the hill, and thus relegated the tavern to an ignominious end.

The Ice Cream Parlor

One might long lament the passing of the ice cream parlor. The present generation, and perhaps the generations to come, will never know its deep significance, the niche it cut into the life-pattern of people who now consider themselves approaching senior citizen status.

Today we have the dairy drive-ins, the malt shops, the quick-freeze emporiums, shops of a hundred variations that serve ice cream. But none quite had the decor and the atmosphere of the ice cream parlor, circa of 1900 and thereafter.

The photo illustrating this bit of whimsy shows a typical ice cream parlor as today's senior citizens knew it in their youth. This one was operated by two brothers, the late John and Jules Faber in Okawville, who were known far and wide for the quality of their ice cream.

No French creams, mousses or spumone, just good old vanilla, strawberry and chocolate on occasions! The ten-cent chocolate soda in those days was comparable to a thirty-cent malt today. An ice cream sundae was served in a silver shell, topped with fruit that was often home preserved.

Each town of any note had one or more ice cream parlors. Most of the establishments made their own ice cream. The freezer of the Faber Bros. was powered by a gasoline engine, and when its erratic "put-put-put" was heard downtown, everyone knew the brothers were making a fresh batch of ice cream.

There was no refrigeration in those days as we know it today. The freshly-frozen ice cream was packed in vats of ice, heavily salted to increase the freezing process. If you were in the ice cream business, you "iced up" the cream at least once daily.

The furniture of the ice cream parlor had its own place in the Americana of the country, the wire-legged chairs and round tables having a distinction all of their own. Even today, the distinction remains, capitalized upon by the antique dealers who have cornered most of the existing furniture of that period.

What was once Faber Bros. Ice Cream Parlor at Okawville is part of Seibert's Grocery today.

Then one day, something new was added to the ice cream world—the Eskimo Pie. Folks were amazed, especially the children. How had the ice cream been imprisoned inside its chocolate wrapper?

The ice cream parlor as grandfather knew it is gone. Perhaps it will return some day, under the guise of twentieth century technocracy. But whether it does or does not, it wrote a glorious chapter all over the land as an American institution enjoyed by all of the family.
 McKinley Station,  
County "Ghost-town"

In southwest Washington County today, a big, square frame building that was once a hotel, is the only reminder of McKinley Station. If Alfred Hitchcock saw the old hotel today, no doubt he would use it as a setting for some bizarre murder mystery to be filmed. It would serve very well, for it does have a ghostly, bizarre appearance and a crimson past.

McKinley Station started as a dairy venture, about 1894. The farm itself was a large tract, well over a thousand acres. There were four large cattle barns, and a creamery that stood west of the hotel.

The hotel had fourteen rooms, and catered to city people who wanted a rural weekend. The M.-I. Railroad stopped at a crossing just south of the hotel, which gave the place its name. People who came to the hotel had saddle horses to ride, and indulged in various rural activities. As many as 100 cows were milked here. There was also a general store.

But the entire venture was ill-fated financially and discontinued about 1904 or 1905.

Washington County does not have a bonafide ghost town, but this old hotel at McKinley Station is reminiscent of a failure in a previous generation.

Today, all that remains of the venture is the old hotel, a lone sentinel on the prairie, alongside the M.-I. tracks, southwest of Oakdale.

Negro Slave Burials in Washington County

Today, there are still two spots within Washington County borders, attesting to a long-past Negro population. On a county road about four and one-half miles East of DuBois, a single gravestone repos in a knoll, shaded by two large trees, a mute reminder that once this was a cemetery. The dimly-etched name on the stone is that of Henry Lewis. Lewis was a Negro, a freed slave, one of several farm families who settled in this part of Washington County about the time of the Civil War’s windup, or perhaps even a few years later. Once this hilltop cemetery contained about twenty marked graves, all Negro, but time has almost leveled the scene to the original terrain.

About a mile Northwest of DuBois, alongside highway 51, there is a second Negro burial, a man named Isaac Umphries, at Chapel Hill cemetery there.

Mr. Adam Kerry, 30-year-old resident of the Kerry School community, East of DuBois, distinctly remembers the time when as a boy he played with other Negro children who lived nearby.

"Most of these Negroes were slaves, recently

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Famed Bridge on a Once-Famous Road

If you were born prior to World War I, and lived in Washington County, you remember the Cox Ferry Bridge that spanned the Kaskaskia River. At one time it was an important link between Washington and Clinton Counties, and a gateway to St. Louis.

This famous bridge, located on the Mud Lake-St. Louis Road, was at one time the only bridge spanning the Kaskaskia between Carlyle and New Athens. It bore the brunt of traffic enroute from southern Illinois to St. Louis.

Now the bridge is gone, and so is the old road.

When the concrete was poured for Illinois State 15, and a new bridge built across the river, north of the Cox Ferry site, the old one soon fell into disuse. Even the road was soon forgotten.

In 1936 a joint effort was made by Washington and Clinton County historians to save the old span, but to no avail.

Before this bridge was erected, a ferry crossed the Kaskaskia here, known as Cox's Ferry. It was the only crossing for the pioneer with his Conestoga wagon, headed west, or for the early farmer whose wagon, loaded with grain and produce, sought the St. Louis markets.

The bridge was razed in 1938. Today, on the Washington County side, nature has reclaimed the road. On the far side of the bridge is the tiny community called Wittenberg. You won’t find it on an Illinois road map, but a cluster of houses on the river, about a mile southeast of New Memphis Station, give credence to the community. Here a factory once stood that made butcher blocks out of native timber. There also was a sawmill and a small hotel called Stopover House. When the traveler to St. Louis reached the Cox Ferry Bridge on the Kaskaskia, he usually figured his journey was half over.

The old Cox Ferry Bridge, razed in 1938.

freed,” he said. “They purchased wooded farm land here because land was very cheap, each family acquiring a forty-acre tract. They were good people, elated by their new freedom. They worked hard to make a living, cleared the land, helped their white neighbors with their crops.”

Mr. Kerry remembers several occasions when he drove a spring-wagon pulled by a team of mules which served as a hearse, at these Negro funerals. The last Negro burial in the old cemetery, Mr. Kerry believes, was that of Henry Lewis, possibly in the year 1914.

Most of these Negroes, he remembers, died of tuberculosis or dropsy. Some of the family names were: White, Thomas, Green, Davis, Merriwether, Umphries and Lewis. Lewis buried five of his children in the old cemetery before his own death and burial there.

Mr. Kerry was quite certain, too, that at one time there were eight Negroes working in the DuBois coal mine, rated “oldest in Illinois.” One by one the families died out, or moved to other communities. Today, all that remains of these former slaves are the old cemetery markers.

Mr. Joseph F. Wagner, who operates Traveler’s Inn on highway 51 near DuBois, also remembers these Negro families. “They were good people,” he said, reminiscing. “We lived together without any trouble whatsoever.”

That Washington County played even a small part in the emancipation of the Negro is of historic note.
Washington County in Grandfather’s Day

Before the Civil War, Washington County was dotted with the one and two-room log cabins familiar to this age. The slow, yet dependable, ox team was still in the barn lot, as well as the wooden mold-board plow, the open fireplace, and the Kentucky (made in Pennsylvania) squirrel rifle. These conditions were part of life’s pattern when the first settlers moved in. There was little change until a few years before the war of the states.

The log cabin will last a long time as an image of pioneer America. It was picturesque to say the least. One end was devoted to the open hearth and fireplace; the chimney usually made of split sticks, mortised with clay, ran up on the outside. The clay was first made into a kind of mortar or adobe, and with this the sticks were freely plastered, to keep down the fire hazard as well as cement the chimney in place. It was referred to as a chink-and-daub chimney.

Usually the fireplace was so large that backlogs for it had to be rolled in at the open door, too big to be carried. The forestick and other pieces of wood rested on the dog-irons, so as to be above the hearth level. At the sides of the hearth, on pegs driven in the

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A pioneer cabin prior to the 1850’s. Once Washington County was dotted with one-room homes such as this.
logs, hung the various blackened pots, kettles, skillets. There also stood the cupboard, usually made of smoothly dressed walnut. The prized blue-edged dishes and pewter were kept there. In one corner usually was a rude shelf resting on oak pegs, upon which was a wooden bucket filled with water for drinking and cooking purposes. A bottle gourd, the pioneer's drinking vessel, hung on a nearby peg. The dining table was usually a dextrously made affair with leaves that folded so it could be pushed against the wall to save space.

On the other side of the fireplace, generally about six feet off the floor, rested the long-barreled flintlock squirrel rifle, wooden pegs in the wall driven for that purpose. The stock ran the entire length of the long barrel, was made of white walnut. Incessant use, added to the original polishing of the gunsmith, made it smooth as ivory. The mounting always was of well finished brass. Near the butt of the stock was a cavity about an inch long, covered with a brass lid, held down by a spring. This was used to carry tallow with which to lubricate the "patchen" used in loading the gun.

Also hanging on one of the hooks on which the heavy rifle rested was a bullet pouch and a powder horn. The pouch was made of leather, usually buckskin, had two or three pockets to hold bullets and patchen cloth. The powder horn originally adorned the head of a cow. The larger end was closed and into the smaller end was fitted a stopper, easily removed. Pouch and horn were provided with leather straps, to be carried over the shoulder. A horn to call the dogs usually rested or was hung from another peg on the wall. If the family was prosperous, there was often a percussion type shotgun in a corner, to be used by the boys who were not as accurate in their shooting as father.

Another article of furniture in the cabin was the candlestand, upon which usually reposed a worn copy of the Bible and a dog-eared almanac. The small windows in the cabin usually contained six 6x6-inch panes of glass.

The door of the cabin swung on wooden hinges, the only kind known, was fastened with a wooden latch. The latch was raised or lowered by a leather thong which passed through a hole and left the free end hanging outside. At nights, when the pioneer wished to lock his cabin, he merely pulled in the latchstring.

The bed usually was softened by a feather tick. A trundle bed rolled under the big bed in the daytime, was pulled out for the children at night. The floor of the better cabins was made of unhewn oak, a great improvement over the puncheon floors of an earlier period. The loft usually was reached by a ladder, where the rafters would be festooned with dried apples hung on strings; dried pumpkin, fruits, peppers, sage to season the meat; pennyroyal to "sweat" the sick ones; honeset to break "the ager"; strings of stuffed sausage, chunks of dried beef.

Crowded as was this cabin, it had at times another article that took up considerable floor space, the loom to weave cloth. Cumbersome as it was, the housewife was an artist on this pioneer contrivance, and from it came the jeans worn by the men, linsey for the women, pretty coverlets, counterpanes and pillow cases. The spinning wheel was the running mate of the loom, and upon it the carded wool was woven into thread.

Cooking was done almost entirely in iron pots, a dextrous art for the housewife, who toiled with the heavy utensils, the spider, the iron tongs with which to pick up hot embers, the big shovel to manipulate the wood fire. Always in the cabin was the pleasant odor of burning wood. Old-timers insisted that no meal could ever approach the delicacy of one cooked at an open hearth.

With the advent of the fifties, matches started to come into more general use. But before this time, the fire on the hearth never went out unless by accident. If it did, someone went to a neighbor's "to borrow live coals," or if there was no neighbor, or the weather was inclement, a bit of gun powder would be put into the pan of the flintlock rifle, a piece of cotton held beside it, then when the trigger was pulled, a spark from the flint would ignite the powder. It in turn would set fire to the cotton, and while this was blazing, it would be hurriedly transferred to "shavings" or other easily inflammable material under the laid kindling in the fireplace.

Food in pioneer days was relatively simple: cornbread and salt pork were the staples. Wheat bread was practically unknown before the fifties. The children ate corn mush and drank their milk warm from the cow, unpasteurized. In winter, kernels of corn were treated with lye, which removed the hull, after which the grains were boiled or fried. This was a wholesome food that was called "big hominy." With the coming of the first frost, one neighbor would kill a hog, divide it with his friends. Weeks later another would kill a beef, divide it likewise. No one had a cellar in those days.

The present method of preserving and canning fruit and vegetables did not come into vogue until 

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about the middle of the fifties. The woods and prairies were full of blackberries, wild plums, crab apples, wild grapes and persimmons. Pawpaws were the bananas of the pioneer.

Soap was made with lye and fat, a custom that still prevails today in a few scattered rural areas. The lye was made by leaching wood ashes, and the fat came from saving all sorts of meat scraps.

Many an early Washington County settler had to depend upon a nearby spring or the “crick” for their drinking water. The only rain water collected was that in a barrel, set under the eaves, and generally full of “wiggle tails” as soon as the weather got warm.

The manner of dress was simple. For everyday wear, men had shirts of jeans, cut loosely; trousers were called breeches, and vests were universally known as “roundabouts.” An outer garment called a “wam-mus” was also popular with men. Boots came into fashion in the early fifties; working men wore heavy shoes referred to as brogans. Clocks and watches were rare, only professional people and ne’er-do-wells carried a timepiece. The pioneer told his time “by sun.”

This was that era of formative years in our nation before the days of hypertension and psychiatry. Looking at the period nostalgically, it might be called “the good old days.” But that, too, is a matter of opinion.


Sod and Soybeans

Why did the first settlers of Washington County choose their homes along the timber edge rather than on the more fertile open prairie? There were at least three reasons. The late Charles Baldwin, an able county historian in his day, explained it this way:

"First, they were closer to fuel, water and building material. Secondly, there was less danger from prairie fires, sometimes started by accident, by lighting, and often by Indians for the purpose of burning them out. Thirdly, the plows of that day were not built strong enough to bust the tough Illinois prairie sod. The first plows brought in by the settlers had wooden mold-boards faced with a few iron strips. They were man-killers, if nothing else.

"Time itself finally eliminated the first two reasons. Then a highly successful sod plow was invented by the first blacksmith of Nashville, a mechanical genius named J. L. Runk, who for some reason has gotten mighty little space in the history books.

"Once he had his plow perfected, Runk joined up in a manufacturing project with a group of Sparta, Illinois men under the name of the Sparta Plow Company, and they put over the plow in a big way. The important feature of this plow was a long, sloping blade set vertically on the land side of the plow-shear, which ripped through roots and sod, taking the place of the rolling coulter that came later. The sharper this blade was kept the better it cut. A big, cumbersome tool, it was, and a man-killer too, but it turned the sod.

"After this plow came into use, the prairies settled up rapidly. The B. & O. Railroad coming into Illinois saw the influx of New Yorkers, many coming to the Hoyleton prairie, where the plow was first put to work. That is, all but one of them put it to work — a man named Marx. Marx' experience with this sod-busting plow is so unique it deserves a few paragraphs in this book.

"He was a young bachelor from upstate New York, knew nothing of farm work. He came to the country with Mr. and Mrs. Ward Atherton, a young couple also from New York State. The two men purchased adjoining eighties about a mile and a half west of Grand Point creek, near the present Irvington-Hoyleton road. They were to alternate, using the plow.

"Atherton's turn came first. Then the next day it was Marx' time. He fought the plow all day, with his Sunday shoes on. That night he slept, or tried to, on his experience. Next morning he told Atherton his land and interest in the equipment were for sale, cheap.

'I don't mind the work,' he explained, 'nor the two-inch roots that fly back and crack my shins. I suppose I could get used to the snakes, and the field mice running up my pants' legs. But I've got a new corn on every toe, and both heels are blistered. Besides, I've ruined my shoes, so I'm quitting!'

"Atherton bought him out. Marx' mind still must have been on his feet and those ruined shoes, for he went into the shoe business in Chicago. Some years later he sent for Atherton's oldest son, Frank, and between them they built the Marx Shoe Company into one of the largest firms in Illinois.

"Looking at the rippling green of today's fields of soybeans in Washington County, the weedless black loam that was once prairie sod, the highly fertilized land, one seldom remembers that once this was virgin soil, with the brome-sedge hip-high, and the "turf" so tough that the first plows couldn't pierce it."
Washington County's Social and Economic Characteristics

Washington County was formed in 1817, including within its first boundaries the present County of Clinton. Ten years later that area was detached and made a separate county. Named for George Washington, the county contains 565 square miles, or a land area of 362,000 acres, more than 85 per cent of which is farmland.

The Covington area is the oldest in the county, the first county seat being located here; first court here dates back to March 9, 1818. The county seat was moved to Nashville in 1831 because a more centrally located site was needed.

On June 25, 1831, the county commissioners contracted for the building of a courthouse, a frame structure which was used until 1840, at which time a new building was built on the public square at Nashville for the sum of $4,385. The present two story brick structure was erected in 1884 at a cost of $24,999. With remodeling and some expansion, the building is still in use.

Nashville, largest town in the county, was laid out on June 3, 1830. Records show that the proprietors, Robert Middleton and G. Brown, deeded a stipulated number of lots to the commissioners, Carter and Whittenberg, who were Tennesseans, and revered everything relative to that state. By permission of the proprietors, they christened the town New Nashville. But the prefix was soon dropped.

Sixteen townships comprise the county. Total population, last census, is 13,569. Six main highways crisscross the county: U. S. 460, and State routes 15, 51, 127, 153 and 177. Its railroads are the Illinois Central, the Louisville and Nashville and the Missouri Pacific.

Farming: A total of 328,566 acres of the county is farmed, with soybeans the top crop, ranking sixteenth in the state, with an annual income of $4 million. More than 1½ million bushels of wheat are raised yearly. Annual income from corn totals above $1 million. Dairying nets $2 million, and livestock income reaches the $5 million figure. The county also ranks second in the state's yield of strawberries, has more than 30 growers.

Industries: Two major industries not related to agriculture provide employment. Largest is Hoben Candy Corporation at Ashley, with a yearly output of more than seven million candy bars. Seven warehouses are maintained in cities scattered from the East to the West coast, with exports going to Newfoundland, Canada, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Panama, the Virgin Islands and Okinawa.

The National Mine Service Company, located at Nashville, is the other large county industry. It manufactures underground mining equipment, with a wide market.

Among other industries furnishing employment in the county are the Nashville Milk Co., the Lorenz Bottling Co., the Venedey Coal Co., the county oil fields, and the quarries at Covington, DuBois, Bolo, Beaucoup and Nashville.

Health and Welfare: The Nashville Memorial Hospital, made possible by a bequest in the will of the late Frederick W. Reuter, a Nashville resident; plus the two nursing homes now operating in the county, Washington Springs Nursing Home at Okawville and Friendship Manor, Inc. at Nashville, are important adjuncts to the well-being of the people, and also supply jobs for various types of personnel.

The Washington County Tuberculosis Association has a well-balanced control program, has done a commendable job in making available free tests and chest X-rays for early diagnosis as well as in providing sanatorium care for those requiring treatment. The county is fortunate in its number of resident physicians.

Churches and Educational Facilities: There are 41 Protestant and 6 Catholic churches in the county. Fourteen school districts serve the area, a reduction from 88 in 1940. All schools have either a lunch or milk program or both. All have bus transportation.

Three public libraries, one at Nashville, Ashley and Richview; and three weekly newspapers, the Nash-
Welfare: The Illinois State Employment Service, through its Mt. Vernon office, provides service in Washington County each Monday, with headquarters in the courthouse. Itinerant service from the Federal Social Security Administration for retirees under the Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance, provision of the Federal Social Security Act, is maintained the first and third Wednesday of each month.

The Illinois Veteran's Commission also serves the county each Monday, as does driver license inspectors on Monday and Tuesday of each week.

The American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and American Cancer Society provide some types of services, but all on a limited basis. Various other civic organizations and community groups do a notable work in their respective communities.

Recreational Facilities: A total of 1600 acres has been purchased by the State Department of Conservation for recreational facilities. Fishing, boating, camping and picnic areas are available. This is known as the Washington County Lake and covers 365 acres of pool area.

The Nashville Memorial Park District has a large picnic area, swimming pool, tennis court and a well lighted ball park.

The fine shaded Community Park in Okawville is maintained by the Community Club and is a picnic area only.

Rural youth in particular participate in the various 4-H clubs active in the county. Approximately 310 county women participate in the Home Bureau Unit activities.

Washington County is a GOOD place in which to live!
The late Fred S. Russell, Okawville Teacher, digging out an old boat from the mud of the Kaskaskia, later identified as an old French bateau.

French Coined Word “Okaw”

To the Washington County resident, and the former resident, everything is interesting that pertains to his or her childhood stomping ground. As a native, or a former native, we have every reason to look with justifiable pride on our State, and on Washington County in particular. We have many “firsts.”

Geographically, our pride has recently been updated in reference to the Kaskaskia River. It is being straightened, controlled, fenced off by a tremendous withholding dam, creating Carlyle Reservoir. For 55 miles, the crooked Kaskaskia is getting its face lifted. The river we’ve known for over a century for its big catfish is now feeling the inroads of industrialization. Soon it will be navigable from its mouth to Fayetteville. As a borderline stream of Washington County, its historic past has never been fully researched.

The stream itself rises in Champaign County, near Urbana. In its erratic course, it flows through twelve counties: Champaign, Douglas, Coles, Moultrie, Shelby, Fayette, Bond, Clinton, Washington, St. Clair, Monroe and Randolph. The tendency of its course is to the Southwest, until it empties into the Mississippi a few miles from Chester. Its entire length is, roughly, 400 miles. In 1837, a small steamboat ascended as far as Carlyle. Within a few years, coal barges will use it as an egress to the Mississippi.

Above us, at Carlyle, the state’s largest man-made lake is now filling, spreading over 26,000 acres. Below us, at Baldwin, the Illinois Power Company is currently building a $200 million power plant.

In its meandering, the Kaskaskia flows past a number of sizeable communities. Urbana, Tuscola, Sullivan, Shelbyville, Vandalia, Carlyle and Chester. The two first capitals of our state, Kaskaskia and Vandalia, reposed on its banks. In its course it is crossed by a dozen or more railroads, is spanned by both a covered and a swinging bridge.

Geographically, the river is the Kaskaskia. But it has been called the Okaw by Washington Countians for long, long years. Near the hamlet of Roots, downstream, there are two bridges spanning it within sight of each other. The highway bridge calls it the Kaskaskia and the railroad bridge labels it the Okaw.

This appellation was derived in somewhat a peculiar manner. In the early days when Illinois was part of the Indiana Territory, representatives were chosen to attend the Territorial Legislature at Vincennes. The inhabited portion of Illinois at that time was mainly

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composed of the early-day French villages. Ancient Kaskaskia, now toppled into the river, was one of these places.

A trail led through the state to the territorial capital, known as the Vincennes Trace. Legislators and travellers rode along this famous trace on horseback, the only means of travel in those days except afoot.

The customary salutation and response along this route among the French finally gave rise to a new word, Okaw. Kaskaskia or Cascasia was abbreviated into Cas (Kah). This was not only true in everyday parlance but many of the old records are dated at "Cas." Hence, when the French travellers along the Vincennes Trace would meet, and inquire about their destination, those going to the old French village would reply that they were enroute to "au Cas" — to Kaskaskia; "au" being pronounced as "o" and meaning "to," while "Cas." being pronounced "kah" was the abbreviation of Cascasia.

The response to "au Cas," or "O Kah" was taken up by the English speaking travellers, and being some-what broadened by the linguistic change of different tongues, finally became the word. Okaw, which has clung to the river for well over a century.

That the early French used the Kaskaskia as a means of travel was very definitely proven at Okawville, back in the days when the late Fred S. Russell was connected with the Agricultural department of the Okawville High School. Russell, an avid historian, solely by chance unearthed an old boat in a sandbar of the Kaskaskia north of Okawville one day. The more he dug, the more he realized that it was an old bateau, a type of early cargo boat used by the French. No doubt it had been imbedded in the mud of the riverbank for long, long years. A freak of the stream unearthed part of the boat, and Russell finally salvaged it in its entirety to further prove his claim. The wood of the boat, its pegged construction, and general design all authenticated his theory that the craft one day had been manned by some early French voyageur using the river as a highway. A photo of Mr. Russell, digging out the historical artifact, is published herewith.

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**Liquor and Beer Vaults**

That grandfather had his "spirits" in pioneer Washington County days is attested by several physical remains of deep wine cellars and other spacious subterranean vaults that kept beer at drinkable coolness, even on the hottest of summer days.

The wine cellar seemed to be inevitable in a German community, a carryover from Old World customs. The beer gardens are gone, but evidence of some of the cellars remain. The photo shows a well preserved wine cellar still in existence in the county, near the home of Mr. and Mrs. Otto McClane, who reside in Pinch, a suburb of Okawville. Once their home was known as the Staude property. The wine cellar dates back at least three generations. It is quite deep, and currently is used for vegetable storage. Its unusual depth guarantees cool temperature despite the season.

Recently a similar cellar was unearthed on the former Julius Temme farm, two miles west of Okawville. At least two more wine cellar locations are known here. These cellars, walled and roofed with brick, were known for their fine arched ceilings and tight masonry.

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*Mr. Otto McClane standing in the wine cellar now used to store vegetables.*
Hoyleton Was Settled in 1858

Hoyleton holds a distinction peculiarly different to other communities of the county: two Congregational ministers, with a colony of ten families, surveyed and platted the town, contributed much to its early growth. Rev. J. A. Bent and Rev. Ovid Miner and their group came from New York state. Hoyleton, until 1860, was called Yankee Town, an appellation suggestive of the group’s heritage.

Horace Wells had the first residence, part of which was used as a post office. The Congregational Church first stood on the site of the old village cemetery in the northeast part of town.

Through the influence of the Central Railroad, the Hoyleton Seminary was erected by Rev. J. A. Bent, Rev. Ovid Miner, and Henry Hoyle, who donated the bell in the seminary belfry. In fact the town was named after Hoyle.

Webb and Leslie had the first general store; Dr. Welborn conducted a small drug store, later built a second store. Horace Wells served as first postmaster.

Hoyleton’s English settlers were not adapted to the agricultural facilities of the region, and one by one

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sold out to the German immigrants pushing in. who incidently, were very much interested in the possibilities of the rolling prairie with its deep sod. By 1830, the English were gone.

Although Hoyleton was laid out in 1858, it was not incorporated until 1881. The first trustees elected were Christ Grabenkrueger, Wm. Grote, Henry Horst, Sr., Christ Krueger, Fred Pries, Sr. and Diedrich Rixmann, Sr. The trustees then elected Christ Krueger, president; Wm. Weigel, clerk; Wm. Heidler, treasurer; Fred Stallmann, constable, and Carl Dickmeyer, street commissioner. Trustee salaries in that day were three dollars yearly.

Early streets were rough, muddy and dusty in season; cinder paths were sidewalks. A favorite Sunday afternoon pasttime was horse racing, not too different from our dragsters today.

What is now the village park was open prairie. First sidewalk, made of wood, was laid in 1883. The same year a log jail was built on the Clarence Wehking property. But the following year, because it had not been used, the building was sold to Gottlieb Struckmeyer, who later moved it to his farm.

In 1896 the village granted right-of-way through town to the Centralia-St. Genevieve R. R. Co., and first trains were operated in 1892 from Sparta to Hoyleton.

In 1892 the officers of the Hoyleton Cemetery Association appeared before the board and presented a petition, praying that the village board take charge of the Hoyleton cemetery, the petition being accepted.

The first brick sidewalk was laid in 1896 on the east side of Center street, from St. Louis to Maple streets.

In 1896, Hoyleton donated $100 to the village of New Minden, to help its people following the tornado that struck there so disastrously.

The village granted H. Wm. Rixmann and Hy. F. Rixmann the right to build the first telephone line within the village limits. Time: 1901.

On Dec. 1, 1903, the village granted right-of-way on the center of St. Louis street, from East to West limits of village (now Illinois state route 177), to the Southern Illinois Electric Railway Company, which was to operate from Irvington to Belleville, and also was to supply the village with electricity for private and commercial needs. The railroad never was built.

In 1913 the village board decided that the citizens needed some kind of fire protection, and an engine (a hand pumper) was purchased for $150 and placed in the village hall.

In 1914, the board passed an ordinance to post speed signs near the corporate limits on all roads leading into the village, the speed of autos and automobiles to be 6 miles per hour. A year later the limit was raised to 10 miles an hour.

An ordinance was passed in 1919 ordering that all autos be parked at a 45-degree angle, with rear end to curb. “Keep to the right” posts were placed in the center of the streets in 1920, to be taken down four years later.

In 1925, the village purchased a $1000 Missouri-Illinois Railroad Bond, to help put the road back into operation.


An election was held on March 26, 1881 to incorporate Hoyleton as a village under the general incorporation laws of Illinois, 37 votes being cast. 25 for and 12 against. First officers were President, Christ Krueger; Trustees, Henry Horst, Sr., Wm. Grote, Christ Grabenkrueger. Diedrich Rixmann, Sr., Fred Pries, Sr.; Clerk Wm. Weigel, Sr.; treasurer, Wm. Heidler.

As early as 1859 a tax was levied for School District 29. First school directors were A. A. Briggs, J. B. Butler and C. N. Rockwell. First school was built at a figure “not to exceed $600.” At first school terms were divided. A winter term began in October, ended in March. A summer term convened in April, ended May 31, a procedure quite different from our present school system. This division of terms was continued here until 1892, when an eight-month term was instituted.

Hoyleton’s first high school consisted of a single room in a two-room building that also housed the 7th and 8th grades. In 1936 the present two-room high school building was constructed with the aid of a PWA grant, operating as a two-year high school until 1952.

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The Congregationalists who came to Hoyleton considered education a first virtue and in 1860, with the cooperation of the Central Railroad Company, built the Hoyleton Seminary. It was used as a public school building from 1884 to 1894. In that year the seminary became the Evangelical Orphan Home.

Immigrants from Germany kept settling in Hoyleton, and by 1866 preaching services begun there, in the building vacated by the Congregationalists. It was decided to establish a new Evangelical congregation at Hoyleton. In the summer of 1867 lumber for the building was hauled to the site and foundations laid. Then a succession of crop failures halted the work for four years. Finally, in 1870 enough funds were raised to build a schoolhouse which also served as a church. In 1879 the new church in Hoyleton was completed, a stately, beautiful structure. The church at North Prairie was torn down, its members coming into the Hoyleton congregation. The benches of the old church were brought here, and its bell presented to a congregation in Lawrence County, Missouri.

The new church was dedicated in 1880. Rev. Frederick Pfeiffer came in the fall of that year. He is given credit for conceiving the idea of starting an Orphanage in 1894 in the old Seminary building.

A church which at one time served the religious needs of a number of Hoyleton’s early citizens was the English Methodist Church, which closed its doors about 1890. The names of some of the early families adhering to this church are: Atherton, Clay, Edmiston, Hinckley, Sanderson, DePuy, Duncan and Wellborn.

The Maple Grove Church was built in 1891. First trustees were Aug. H. Schnake, W. J. Livesay, J. W. Gillian, P. F. Farmer and W. H. Randell. This church served the community over 65 years, when on Sunday, March 11, 1956 its 38 members joined the Methodist Church in Hoyleton.

The history of Trinity Lutheran Church is found elsewhere in this volume under an article giving an itemization of the Lutheran movement in the county.

The Hoyleton Methodist Church was organized in 1876. Since Nashville was building a new Methodist church at that time, the Hoyleton congregation purchased their building and moved it to Hoyleton.

In 1902 a new church building was built here, and August Schmale bought the old building and moved it to his farm as a granary.

The Hoyleton church separated from the Nashville church in 1878 and secured its own minister. Rev. Charles Rodenberg.

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When the St. Louis German conference was formed the next year, the Hoyleton church became affiliated with that body. In 1925 it became a part of the Southern Illinois Conference, when the merger transferred all German Churches of the area to this English group. In 1930 the church building was remodeled, a basement and furnace added.

Hoyleton's present Evangelical Orphan Home was established in the old seminary building, being dedicated on June 3, 1895. Mr. and Mrs. Louis Beckmeyer were the first orphan parents. The Indiana District joined the Orphans' Home District in 1903, making necessary the addition of two wings across the end of the building. The renovated and redecorated home was rededicated on Sept. 27, 1903. The Evangelical Orphans Association was organized to take care (legally) of the many children seeking admittance to the institution. The Iowa District joined in 1911.

On June 15, 1915 the home was totally destroyed by fire, and the children were cared for by various townspeople until the present structure was built. The name later was changed to Child Welfare Association.

The first bank at Hoyleton was privately owned, called, simply, the Hoyleton Bank. On Nov. 3, 1906, the Hoyleton German Bank was organized, purchasing the private institution. Today it is known as Hoyleton State and Saving Bank.

The American Legion Post at Hoyleton was organized on Jan. 22, 1921, under the name of Claude Earl Post, No. 711, Department of Illinois. It was named in honor of Claude Earl, the first to die while in the service of his country in World War I. The Post was discontinued in 1930, then reorganized on Jan. 5, 1945 as Claude Earl Post, No. 337.

Hoyleton was the birthplace of the Washington County Farm Bureau, mainly through the efforts of the late Martin Schaeffer. After untold effort, the County Farm Bureau held its first annual meeting at Nashville, Aug. 3, 1926. The first board of directors was composed of George J. Hake, John Groennert, H. D. Hake, J. R. Hood, L. F. Ochs, Bert Pitchford, Amos Lyons, D. W. Dawkins, Paul Beckmeyer, Edgar McLaughlin, E. W. Lammers, F. J. Schleifer. The officers of this board were President, J. R. Hood; vice president, Geo. J. Hake; secretary, D. W. Dawkins. Offices were established in the Nashville courthouse.

Hoyleton has an active American Legion Auxiliary, a unit of the Home Bureau, a 4-H Club, Lions Club, Ground Observer Corps and once a Boy Scout troop.

Hoyleton has the distinction of having a game that is purely local. It was invented by Prof. Peter Fashbender, years ago, still is played by many here. It is called Napoleon, and is played with dominoes.

Hoyleton had a brickyard, established in 1870. Back in 1912 it had a bakery. From 1925 to 1927 it had a community newspaper, the Hoyleton Hustler, published by Edwin Muentzer.

Grand Point Creek, east of Hoyleton, was once the site of a large Indian village. It was a very old village and is said to have been abandoned at the time Gen. George Rogers Clark passed this way in 1779.

Records of the Post Office Department show that postal service was established at Hoyleton, Dec. 17, 1857. The following postmasters served: Joe. A. Bent, 1857; Wm. E. Webb, 1858; Horace Wells, 1859; Delos Steward, 1863; Horace W. Wells, 1867; Enoch F. Wellhorn, 1877; Christian L. Krueger, 1885; Jacob Keller, 1889; Louis Krueger, 1893; Adolphus Grote, 1897; Jacob Keller, 1901; Arthur C. Beckmeyer, 1915; Lawrence F. Hake, 1922; Gustav C. Michael, 1930; Paul H. Sachtleben, 1931, present incumbent.

In 1902, two rural routes were established, carriers being Theo. Schierbecker, John Seyler, Louis Racherbaumer, Arthur Rixmann, Harlan Gerstkemper and Paul Lockwood. Frank Stahmer, Wm. Breuer and Paul Maschhoff had temporary appointments.
THE BIG "SHAKE"

The Great Shake, which rocked this area of southern Illinois like a bowl of jello, began on the night of December 16, 1811. It was the worst earthquake ever to strike the Midwest. Had it occurred today, the loss of life might have been chalked up in hundreds of thousands, with property damage astronomically high.

The only reason very little has been written, in relation to Washington County, Illinois, is explainable. The only pioneers here at the time were two hardy groups, the families of David Lively and John Huggins. If these families left any written words of their experiences near what is now Covington during the ominous winter of the quake, it was presumably lost, for the Indian massacre that wiped out these pioneers was complete and terrifying.

But even today, 156 years after the quake, there are evidences of its fury still recognizable within the county. There are "flats" and "sinkholes" that were caused by it. Some geologists even believe it changed the contour of streams, the Kaskaskia River and some of the larger creeks.

This is borne out by air photos of Washington County terrain, taken at high altitude, that show the present stream beds, and old watercourses, where the streams cut new channels. Flood could have done this, of course. But there also is the possibility that this early earthquake was the cause.

Remember that it fashioned Reelfoot Lake in Tennessee, dropping a large area of the terrain from six to twenty feet, into which water poured to form this gigantic inland reservoir. Even today, local fishermen who travel here annually for week-ends, will tell you of the many cypress stumps protruding from the lake, attesting it was once a cypress forest that sank in its entirety.

This same earthquake, the epicenter of which was in the area of New Madrid, Missouri, cracked walls and chimed clocks as far distant as the Virginias. It reversed the current of the Mississippi River for hours, formed new islands and sandbars. It sank other islands and even part of the town of New Madrid.

The frontiersmen at that time were well acquainted with the danger of losing their scalp to the Indians. But facing the "Great Shake" was facing the unknown.

A great proportion of these early settlers had so little education that they could not even sign their names. Many were superstitious as well. In this era of the American frontier, religion portrayed the wrath of God as very real and very near.

So it was that terror was almost universal when the scattered pioneers were routed out of bed at two o’clock in the morning of December 16, 1811. Without warning the sleepers were awakened by cracking and groaning noises, the fall of stones from the chink-and-daub chimneys, the roll and pitch of the earth under their feet. The odor of sulphurous gases filled the air.

The settlers rushed out into the night, and the ground weaved beneath their feet. Cracks opened up, widened into yawning chasms. Many dropped to their knees in prayer, thinking the end of the earth had come.

Indeed, that night, and for many nights in the future (there were 172 separate earthquakes, all told) many were firmly convinced that God was visiting His wrath on them for their misdeeds. There had never been anything like the New Madrid Earthquake. Even after the passage of months, some of the settlers still didn’t realize what had actually happened.

Had that winter of earthquakes happened today, the loss in life and property damage would have been little short of amazing. Witnesses described waves in the ground like those of the sea. Whole forests tumbled into the rivers. Landslides tore great hills and ridges apart. Banks of streams caved in; islands disappeared and new ones formed. Cattle and horses fell into the great fissures opened in the earth. The air reeked of strange fumes. An unnatural darkness came over the land in the daytime.

At New Madrid, Missouri, first center of the shock, most of the pioneer town was turned into rubble. After the first quake, only two families remained. The shocks continued, in an ever widening area. Geologists who have since studied the evidence believe the epicenter moved from the original point of disturbance to a spot about twenty miles from the juncture of the Wabash and Ohio rivers, at the eastern perimeter. Most of southern Illinois felt the shocks, which includes Washington County, but at the time much of the area covered by the quake was virgin wilderness and empty prairie.

There were no seismologists or geologists in the area at that time to make recordings of the quakes. But well educated men like Timothy Flint, John James Audubon, the naturalist, and Daniel Drake kept care-

Continued
ful records of the disturbances. Sir Charles Lyell, the great British geologist, came to the area in 1815 to study the many visible evidences of the quake, the fissures, the “sunken lands,” and the “new channels” cut by various streams.

The “Great Shake” of 1811 is all but forgotten. Since then, there have been only minor earthquakes felt in this area of the Midwest. But geologists point to the fact that this is “earthquake country.” So it is natural to ask a question: will it happen again?
The first settlements in the county were made in what is now Covington township, 1810-11. It was here that the Lively family was massacred. Wm. H. Bradsby in 1818 settled at the crossing of the old Kaskaskia and Peoria trail, where he cleared a small farm. When Washington county was organized, the county seat was located on this farm. In 1819 he was appointed circuit clerk by Gov. John Reynolds. For many years he held the office of circuit and county clerk, probate judge, county surveyor and postmaster. He died in Nashville in 1839.

Hartshorn White settled at Covington about 1819. Jesse Moore came to the same area in about 1820. The first German settler in that part of the county was F. W. Hoffman, 1840. He was followed in 1841 by Frederick Prasuhn and F. Ellerbusch.

The first permanent settler in Plum Hill was Wm. Wheeles, who came in 1814 and settled on the Vincennes and Kaskaskia trace. He was followed by James Sawyer in 1819. In 1827 Thomas Atehison came, and John Weaver a year later. Hawkins Ragland came in 1827. The first school house, of hewn logs with punch-eon floor, was built on the hill. It was not replaced with a frame building until 1852. Isaac Hale was the first physician. Chills and fever were the prevailing diseases, and quinine, calomel and jalap were the standard remedies used by the knights of the pillbox.

Pilot Knob’s settlement goes back to 1818, when John Rainey was the first settler there. In the same year James Gordon settled there as well. The first schoolhouse was built in 1834, a traditional log build-
ing. The first school teacher was Horatio Burns, a grandfather of the former 'Squire John Burns of Nashville. The first physician to administer antitoxins for snake bites, chills and fever, was Joseph Brashin.

Henry T. East was the first settler in Lively Grove, a native of Tennessee, who settled there in 1828. The following year came Jesse Lively, Wm. McBride and Absolom Tidwell. Samuel Gibson settled here in 1831. He was followed by Robert Stewart, John Wiley, James Gillespie and Archie Coulter in 1832. The first school, a primitive log building, was taught by Daniel Morton. The first marriage occurred in 1834, that of John Dickey and Jane Gibson.

Death came quickly on the prairie and in the woods. Asa C. Fletcher, 29, a chain carrier for government surveyors, was bitten by a rattlesnake and died a few hours later. He was interred on the spot, a hill south of the present bridge across Mud Creek.

Prior to 1837, the following families were living at Venedy: Joseph Kinyon Sr., who had two sons also living in this precinct, Daniel and Joseph Jr., and the Richard Walton family. Among the early settlers there were families by the names of Jones, William, Wilson, Brown and Dr. E. Hale.

As early as 1831, F. Nobles and a man named Mayberry made settlements in the southeast part of Hoyleton precinct. John Harr. Sr. settled in the north-east part in 1840. The first schools were taught in private homes, Edward Russel being the first teacher. In 1853, J. A. Bent and Ovid Miner, congregational ministers, established a colony near the center of the precinct. New Englishers, they laid out the village of Hoyleton the same year, built the first church there in 1859. Through the influence of the Central Railroad Company, the Hoyleton seminary was built.

The first settlers of the town were Easterners and it was called “Yanketown.” In 1866, C. Krueger and Wm. Grote purchased a lot and erected a store. That same year, German settlers began coming in, and by 1870, most of the original English settlers had sold out to the incoming Germans.

The first settlers of Irvington precinct were a Mr. Scott and family who came in 1827. The following year came Richard and Aber Jolliff. John Lock came in 1829, and John Faulkner, Daniel Waller, John Williams, Thomas A. Nichols and Wm. Crabtree the following year. M. G. Faulkner came in 1831, and J. Williams in 1832. Most of these people were from Kentucky, Tennessee and Indiana, and were hardy, honest and industrious. The first school was built in 1844; first teacher was Wm. Leeper. Prior to that time classes were held in any cabin that was vacant. Illinois

Agriculture College was incorporated at Irvington in 1861. By act of legislature in 1867 the charter was so amended as to authorize the board of trustees to introduce the teaching of any and all branches of science usually taught in higher educational institutions of the country, and to confer degrees. This institution was discontinued and the property was later occupied by the Hudelson Orphan Home.

The Woodromes were the first settlers of Ashley precinct, coming in 1825. William and Burton Nichols, two Georgians, came the following autumn. Soon afterward followed Elijah Smith, Thomas Howell and the widow McMillan. The first school taught in the precinct was in a log building, in 1829, the teacher being Jarvis Jackson.

James Severs is regarded as the first settler of Richview precinct, locating at Greene Point in 1823. Samuel White and M. Castelberry settled at Grand Point in 1829. Other early settlers with their families were William Nichols, Asa Foster, E. Smith, Samuel White, Joseph Barber, John Tate, Josiah Thompson, Thomas Livesay, Wm. B. Livesay, Wm. H. White, Smith McWilliams, James Gore, Matthew and H. G. Whittenberg. All the above came prior to 1840, most of them from Tennessee.

Washington Seminary was projected in 1856, later acquired by R. G. Williams for $1500. The attendance was large, but after graded schools were established, the enrollment decreased. Some of the prominent men in the county were trained here. Richview also maintained a fine public library, possibly the largest in the county.

The early settlers of DuBois precinct were principally from Kentucky and Tennessee. First settler was George Palmer who came in 1827. The following year, W. S. Anderson, Robert McCord, L. Stewart and L. Waters settled in this township. In 1829 came David Stilley, H. Stilley and Peter Sronce. From 1830 to 1832 the following families located here: Hy. Bridges, Abraham Phillips, William Hilley, and Alexander White, a pioneer blacksmith.

The first settlers of Nashville precinct were Samuel K. Anderson, John Morgan, Landon Park, a Negro, and Nicholas Darter, Odeen Fisher, David Ramsey, John D. Wood, Livesay Carter and L. D. Livesay, who settled at various periods from 1819 to 1833.

Nashville was laid out by the proprietors, Robert Middleton and G. Brown on June 5, 1830, and a report and plat of the city was filed with the commissioners by A. W. Cassada, county surveyor. The records show that the proprietors deeded a stipulated number of lots

Continued
to the commissioners for the use of the county, and used the remainder for themselves. David White, Joseph Whittenberg and Livesay Carter were the commissioners. Carter and Whittenberg, Tennesseans, christened the town "New Nashville," but the "new" was soon dropped. First house was built by Sam K. Anderson. First marriage was that of Rev. Horatio Burns to Mrs. Martha Morgan, on Nov. 22, 1831.

The first settlement in Okawville precinct was made about 1825. Among the early settlers were the Harrymans, Pitmans, Wheelers, Gallraiths, Shorters, Middletons, Clarks, Johnsos, Kisers and Whites. Another group, coming later, included the Staudes, Garvins, Hughes, Williams, Adams, all of whom had families. Okawville was laid out as a town by James Garvin and James Davis in 1856. Previous to this, H. P. Morgan had laid out the town of Bridgeport, which was immediately east, across Plum Creek. First school was built in 1828, with Wm. Boyd as first teacher.

John Raney was the first settler in Elkton precinct, a Tennessean, who came in 1822. (A more detailed story of Elkton is printed elsewhere in this book.)

Washington County’s first court was held March 9, 1818, and called the Justice Court.

First Board of Commissioners was composed of Wm. Rountree, John Kain and James Gilbreath, elected in 1819.

Wm. H. Bradsy was first clerk of the circuit court, appointed in 1818, serving until 1839.

Daniel S. Swearingen was the county’s first sheriff, appointed in 1818, served but one year. First assessor and treasurer was Rufus Recker, appointed in 1819. He resigned soon afterward, for some reason.

Wm. H. Bradsby was first county clerk (1818), also first probate judge (1821). Thomas F. White was first county judge, John Crain the first school commissioner. Wm. H. Clayton was elected first county superintendent of schools in 1865.

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**County Weather Man**

In the more than forty years that Robert Schleifer of near Nashville served as Washington County’s official “rain gauger,” he recorded more than 125 feet of precipitation that fell on the county. The late Mr. Schleifer, who worked under the jurisdiction of the St. Louis Weather Bureau, had his testing equipment set up in the yard of his farm home, and kept a complete record of county rainfall for nearly half a century.

In that time, his records show periods of extreme drought, and very unusual weather conditions, including the visitation of several tornadoes that roared through the county. Down through the years, his meticulous methods in making a daily weather report is an example of a man dedicated to his job. Incidentally, there was no salary involved, but with Mr. Schleifer it was a work of love. He was one of the unsung heroes of the county. whose memory will long linger.
Nostalgic Farm Scene

Nostalgia is a word often used in the editing of a county history. This farm scene, photographed on the Ray Garlich farm at Plum Hill before the advent of the combine, is nostalgia at its best.

The younger generation have never thrilled to the chug-chug of an old farm threshing engine, coming up the farm lane, pulling its separator. Puffing black smoke to the tune of sizzling steam, it was a sight to thrill any farm boy. It signified a long-heralded event: threshing time. The stacked wheat, usually four stacks in a rectangular unit, spaced just wide enough for the separator to be pulled between, were sent through the separator, bundle by bundle. The newly-threshed wheat was stacked in a conical strawpile that usually graced the barn yard for most of the winter.

The threshing crew, following the “rig” from farm to farm, usually got five meals a day, lunch in the morning, and another lunch in mid-afternoon. This lunch break was even better than the coffee-break of today, for it was a meal in itself, sausage and home-baked bread, topped off with pie or cake.

The water wagon was an institution in itself. The man who rode it had one very important duty to fulfill: keep enough water on hand to feed the boiler of the steam engine. Usually water was obtained from a nearby creek or pond. A hand pump on top of the water wagon was activated by hand.

The water boy was also an institution at these threshing rigs. Carrying a two-gallon jug, usually with a corncob for a stopper, the boy made the rounds of the crew, several times daily. Augmenting the water jug at some farms was another jug, with slightly stronger liquid, “to cut the dust,” before the swig of water. Everyone drank out of the same jug.

Wheat and oats threshing prior to the advent of the combine, was a community affair, an example in neighborliness and warm, continuing friendships. Each community had its threshing rig. One of the most popular type rigs was the Jumbo steam engine and the Harrison separator, both made at Belleville. Another popular engine was the Gaar-Scott and the J. I. Case.
New Minden, Town with an Old World Culture

At the junction of Illinois routes 127 and 177 is New Minden, the one community within Washington County that reflects a noticeable Old World culture. Perhaps ninety percent of its populace of one hundred and fifty are of true German descent. Some of them are direct descendants of Fred E. Hoffman and F. W. Prasuhn, the first German immigrants to settle in the area (1830-40).

Like most of the early pioneers, these men chose homesites that were near timber, prairie and water. The prairie was here, so was the forest. Little Crooked, Big Crooked and the Kaskaskia were nearby. To the east and south the open prairie was hip-deep in grass. This area still is called New Minden prairie.

Other immigrants soon followed Hoffman and Prasuhn. They built their houses true to European customs, with the building close to the street, and space in the rear for a garden, chicken house, a smoke house, and perhaps a small barn. Soon the question arose of naming the new community. Since many of them had emigrated from Minden, Germany, they gave the name, New Minden to their village.

Continued

The old mill slowly falling into decay at New Minden.
Followed the building of a church, a parochial school, a parsonage for the Rev. M. Eirich, who led the Ev.-Lutheran congregation until he retired in 1890. The frame church was destroyed by a tornado in 1896. But by 1900 it was rebuilt, the center of a parish numbering 1,200 people, although the village itself contained less than one-fourth that number.

The first settlers came to establish farms, as did those who followed. From the beginning, agriculture was the sole purpose of their lives. The only movement toward industrialization was the erection of two mills, a grist mill in the southeast part of the village, and a sawmill to the north, on Crooked Creek. The grist mill still stands, unused for years, but is slowly falling into decay.

The railroad passed New Minden by, leaving it an isolated town, just as it did Venedy, to the southwest. Isolation was even worse during the winter, when muddy roads were a barrier to all but emergency travel.

But there was no starvation. The German housewives canned and preserved all available fruits and vegetables in the summer, and wheat and corn was ground into flour at the mill. Crockets of sauerkraut were part of every cellar; smoke houses were amply stocked with home-killed meat, mostly pork. Each farmer slaughtered his own meat, and the village store traded produce for other essentials of life. The wood they cut in the timber tracts was used to heat their homes.

Then, in 1896, a vicious tornado completely disrupted this peaceful community, leaving in its wake only a twisted, tangled mass of debris. The church was gone, so were most of the dwellings. Only the stone mill survived intact.

But the people rallied, and started to rebuild. The wooden church building was replaced by a sturdier one. Then, in 1907, came a second storm, leveling the school and several houses that stood between the church and the store. And again the people rebuilt.

The pattern of the Old World was still evident. The shuttered homes were again close to the streets, the auxiliary buildings to the rear. Today, new ranch-type dwellings along the highway have changed the pattern somewhat, but many of the old homes still stand. The German language is rarely heard on the streets today but that doesn't mean that the Old World culture is gone. Life patterns change more slowly in a rural community than in an urban center, and New Minden is one county town where Old World culture and habits still cast a very definite image.

The County "Poor Farm"

It had an ominous name, and back in grandfather's day, many a youngster, admonished for some spending spree, was cautioned that "he'd end up in the poor house!" But it had its worth. It was the nursing home of yesteryear, with its own kind of Medicare. Dependent people of both sexes were cared for within its walls, fed and clothed at county expenses. Down the lane was the cemetery, with its simple grave markers.

The Washington County Farm, south of Nashville, now falling into ruin. Here the county cared for its poor dependents in grandfather's day.

The Washington County home shown here, is located three miles south of Nashville, is no longer owned by the county. The building itself has fallen into decay since the above photo was taken. Yet even in its present stage of ruin, it is pointed out as the "poor house." Its image will live long after the physical property has returned to the dust.
KINYON SETTLEMENT

Very few of today's generation know of the existence of Kinyon Settlement. But once this site, four miles south of Okawville, was the hub of a community of pioneers in which the Kinyon name dominated. The old cemetery, shown here, is slowly but surely falling into decay. The stone of John Kinyon, left in the photo, shows he was born in 1805. That of his wife, Elvira, stands adjacent to the north. Once this cemetery was the burial place of the Friends, Wilsons, and various others, but no burial has been made here for at least half a century.

The Grand Prairie Baptist Church, which served the community, stood just south of the cemetery. When it was abandoned, the building was moved to a nearby farm, where it still is being used as a farm shed.

The editor of this book, luckily, has the old Bible used in this church, a gift of his mother, Mrs. Sarah Jane Britukman.
"The-Meadow-in-the-Hole"

Perhaps you haven't heard of "The-Meadow-in-the-Hole." But you have heard debates, pro and con, whether George Rogers Clark and his group of "Kentucky's Long Knives" ever marched through Washington County, in their trek from Kaskaskia to Vincennes.

In Clark's company was a young soldier, Maj. Joseph Bowman, who kept a journal of the historic band's daily exploits. Archer Hulbert, who studied this journal at length, writes in his "Historic Highways of America," Vol. 3, to the effect that Clark did cross Washington county.

Hulbert concludes "that on the eighth day of February 1779, enroute from Kaskaskia to Vincennes, Clark and his men were out of Randolph County, through the northwest corner of Perry County and finally gained the prairie south of Oakdale, Washington County, at which point Elkhorn Creek was crossed at the famous 'Meadow-in-the-Hole' of old French days.

"This region was also known as Corne de Cerf, Elkhorn Prairie, Elkhorn Point and Ayers Point. Prairie, forest and bottom land were not for apart here. The 'Meadow-in-the-Hole' was a singular little meadow, fifty or sixty yards wide, located on a dry branch of the Elkhorn and thirty feet lower than the surrounding forests—at what is now Oakdale on the Elkhorn."

There has grown up about the area a legend that Clark and his men camped here overnight. But this has surely been based either on a wrong interpretation of facts or romantic fiction. The facts are that "the first night's camp was pitched probably in Flat Prairie, somewhere in the area surrounding Coulterville, likely south or southwest of it in Randolph County."

The next campsite was close to the present town of Richview, as Hulbert again concludes from his study of the Journal: "The second night's camp may have been pitched on Grand Point Creek, near Richview; and that of the ninth on Raccoon Creek, near Walnut Point, one mile north of Walnut Hill."

If one checks the incorporated map, it will be noted that these are somewhat similar and reasonable distances for the wet, muddy conditions at that early part of the year when the weather could be exceptionally capricious in southern Illinois.

On the other hand, the 'Meadow-in-the-Hole' could very well have been and probably was used as a camping place by either the Indians or the French. It will be remembered this was not a new trail Clark was cutting across Illinois, but one already in existence used by the French as a land route between Vincennes and Kaskaskia, which they in all probability learned from the Kaskaskia Indians, a tribe friendly to them in this era.

![William Ayers, founder of Oakdale, is buried on a knob overlooking the "Meadow-in-the-hole." George Rogers Clark marched through this declivity.](image)

Whether or not Clark camped at the 'Meadow-in-the-Hole,' or merely passed through the tiny valley will perhaps never be known for certain. But all indications point to the fact that the historic march did encompass this bit of terrain inside Washington County's borders.

Any citizen of Oakdale will point out 'Meadow-in-the-Hole' today. It is much as it was, back in 1779.
The First Families of Washington County
By Cdr. Earl R. Smith

On the following pages are the names of the heads of the families who lived in Washington County, Illinois, at the time of the taking of the 1820 census.

This census was chosen for this publication for several reasons:

First, it was known that some of the families listed here also appeared on the 1810 and 1818 censuses. These are identified by an asterisk.

Second, the 1820 census taker, unlike some others, gave the name of the precinct (township) in which the family lived. Since Clinton County was not formed until 1824, Carlyle, for instance, is shown as a precinct of Washington County, which added a note of interest.

Finally, it was believed that any reader who found one of his ancestor's names among the pioneer families shown here might be moved to explore his personal history still deeper, and, using this reference as a guide might be motivated to do some work on his family tree to be deposited eventually with the Washington County Historical Society.

Any census or record as old as this one must, of course, be viewed with reservation. The original documents now lodged in the National Archives at Washington, D.C., are often hard to read. The handwriting is often illegible, the spelling quixotic. The early settlers were just as suspicious of census takers as they were of tax collectors, and were not above evasiveness. Thus there may be gaps, omissions and mistakes.

Generally speaking, however, most of the names and families shown here are too well known in the century and one half history of Washington County not to be quickly recognized.

1820 Census — Washington County, Illinois

| ABBOT, Christopher | CALLAHAN, Robert |
| ABBOT, John | CARR, James |
| ADAMS, John | CARR, Samuel |
| ALLEN, Elizabeth | CARRIGAN, James |
| ANDERSON, Isaac | 'CARRIGAN, John |
| ANDERSON, James | CARRIGAN, William |
| ANDRUS, Archibald | CARTER, John |
| ARTHUR, Samuel | CARTER, Lewisey |
| APLING, Pleasant | CARTER, Richard |
| ATKINS, Henry | CASTLEBURY, Meredith |
| AYERS, Rupel | 'CHAFFIN, Ellis |
| AYERS, William | CHANDLER, Anderson |
| BAKER, Elizabeth | CHAPIN, Loonsa |
| BALES, Elijah | CHAPIN, Samuel |
| BANDY, Elihu | 'CHESNEY, Alexander |
| BANKSON, Andrew | CHESNEY, Benjamin |
| BARWELL, Henry | CLARK, John |
| BATES, Thomas | COCKRAM, James |
| BEGOLE, Joshua | 'COLE, Edward |
| BERRY, Frederick | COLE, Richard |
| BERRY, Nancy | COOPER, Herman |
| BERRY, William H. | COOPER, John |
| BITTO, John | 'COX, Benjamin |
| BLACK, C. P. | COX, Charles |
| BLACKMAN, William | CRAVTON, William |
| BOYD, Joseph | 'CREAL, John |
| BRAKE, John | 'CROCKER, Arthur |
| BRADFORD, John | CROCKER, Elizabeth |
| BRADBMY, William H. | 'CROCKER, Jacob |
| BRASSELTON, Benjamin | 'CROCKER, William |
| BREWER, Jacob | DARNAL, Isaac |
| BROWDER, Jonathan | DARNAL, William |
| BROWN, Collier | DAVIS, Robert |
| BROWN, George | DEAS, John |
| BROWN, John | DILLON, Thomas |
| BROWN, Samuel | EASON, Pomeroy |
| BUCK, James | 'EDON, James |
| BURTON, Gideon | EDWARDS, Susanna |
| BUTLER, Charles | ELLIOTT, E. |
| ELLIOTT, E. | 'EVANS, John |
| EVANS, John | EVANS, John Jr. |
| EVANS, John Jr. | 'FRENCH, Martha |
| FRENCH, Martha | GILBERT, James |
| GILLES, Thomas | GILMORE, John |
| GODFREY, Hanson | GORDON, James |
| GORDON, James | 'GREEN, Bowling |
| GREEN, Bowling | 'GRIFFIN, Jepy |
| 'HAGERMAN, Benjamin | HADDY, John |
| 'HARREI, Theophilus | HARRRMAN, Charles |
| HAWKINS, Lemuel | HAWKINS, Simon |
| HERBERT, Joseph | HEMIN, Major |
| HERRIN, Major | HERRIN, Simon |
| HERS, John | HILL, Jonathan |
| HILL, John | HILLHOUSE, William |
| HITCHCOX, Stephen | HITCHING, John |
| HILTON, Seth | HOCKIN, Amy |
| HOLL, Holm, Peter | HUGGS, David |
| HUEY, John | HUGGS, Lewis |
| HUEY, Thomas | HUGGS, William |
| HUGHSON, Isaac | HUTCHINS, John R. |
| IRE, William | JOHNSON, David |
| JOHNSON, David | 'JOHNSTON, Hugh |
| JOHNSTON, Hugh | 'JOHNSTON, John |
| 'JOHNSTON, John | 'JOHNSTON, John Sr. |
| JOHNSTON, John Sr. | Continued |
Sheriffs of Washington County

Washington County is justly proud in having one of the lowest crime rates in the State. Even so, there is need for a county sheriff, always has been, always will be. Here-

Daniel S. Swearingen, 1818-19.
Harry Wilton, 1819-20.
Boling Green, 1820-22.
Joel Madley, 1822-23.
Levin N. English, 1824-25.
Thomas H. Moore, 1825-29.
John Crain, 1830-36.
John White, 1836-40.
John H. McElhannon (resigned) 1840-45.
Willis White, 1848-50.
Isaac B. Jack (died in office) 1850.
Francis D. Taylor (coroner) 1852.
John White, 1852-54.
Salem Goodner, 1854-56.
James Garvin, 1862-64.
James H. Sawyer, 1864-66.
W. H. Clayton, 1866-68.
D. R. Meyers, 1868-70.
John White, 1870-72.
James Garvin, 1872-74.
Jacob May, 1874-78.
William Lane, 1878-82.
Charles Gerstkemper, 1882-86.
Charles Gerstkemper, 1886-90.
O. P. Hallem, 1886-90.
Daniel M. White, 1890-94.
Gerhard G. Schneider, 1894-98.
August H. Cahlmeyer, 1898-1902.
J. M. Winfree, 1902-06.

Henry F. Vogelpohl, 1910-14.
Jacob K. May * 1914-17.
Henry Klosterhoff, 1917-22.
Martin H. Petri, 1926-30.
August H. Cahlmeyer, 1930-34.
J. U. Spencer, 1934-38.
Harry C. Anderson, 1938-42.
Albert Garman, 1938-42.
Albert Garman, 1950-54.
Joe J. Berry, present incumbent.

* Jacob K. May was killed while on duty, June 20, 1917, the only sheriff of Washington County to lose his life in executing his job as a law officer.

Washington County’s Schools

In early county history, schools were conducted by churches or established by communities. In the latter case, buildings usually were constructed by donated labor, pupils charged on a per capita basis, teachers boarded free by parents.

In 1856, townships were divided into school districts, usually four, but later one or two more per township were added. Districts were named and numbered by townships. In 1903, district numbers were changed so no two numbers would be alike in any county. Washington County began with number 1 in the northeast, ended with 36 in the southwest part of the county. Hoepker, number 37, was added later, as were the present high school district numbers. School terms were of different lengths, usually five or six months. Then came the seven month term, which was changed to eight months by state law in 1929, and nine in 1955.

These early schools were governed by a three member board, each township had a three member board of trustees and a township treasurer. The County Superintendent was over the entire county. In 1839, the first state course of study was printed. Each county had a final examination for its eighth grade pupils, and a county commencement for those who passed. In Washington County, these were broken down to township examinations and township graduations in 1931. Today, each district has its own means of graduation and commencement exercises.

As late as 1937 we still had one teacher who taught in a one-room school for $37.50 a month, furnished his own firewood, did all of his own janitor work, and taught between forty and fifty classes daily.

School Commissioners

John Crain was appointed in 1835, reappointed in 1840; Jacob Goodner in 1841; Z. H. Vernor in 1843; Harry Nevill in 1847; Z. H. Vernor in 1853; Wm. H. Clayton was elected in 1861, re-elected in 1865.

County Superintendents

Alden C. Hillman, 1866-73; Samuel C. Page, 1873-77;
The old houses that played a part in the "underground" movement of slaves during the Civil War era are just about extinct, but luckily, Washington County still has a house standing (and occupied) that was once used to hide slaves.

It was built by John Hood in 1843, and stands just off the blacktop road leading southwest from Oakdale to Coulterville.

Still in a good state of preservation today, the large two-story brick dwelling has two chimneys, each of which served as vents for three fireplaces. Each chimney has a fireplace in the cellar, one on the main floor, and another on the second floor. It is an established fact that slaves were hidden here during the time of the "underground railroad."

There were other dwellings in the county that figured in the slave movement, but none exist today as an occupied dwelling. The house shown here is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Ray Kohring.

This house, built by John Hood, still standing, was once part of the underground slave movement in Washington County.
Glimpses of Oakdale’s Past

Attesting to the great age of the Oakdale community is the fact that its cemetery contains the graves of two Revolutionary War soldiers; the grave of a veteran of the Blackhawk War; one of a Mexican war casualty; and no less than thirty-five marking the last resting places of Civil War casualties. The cemetery, three miles southwest of Oakdale, once the sight of a pioneer church, is still being used.

The first church built in the Oakdale area stood near the present cemetery, about 3½ miles southwest of the town. This photo is a reproduction from a small painting hanging in the R. P. church today.

The Missouri-Illinois Railroad was built through Oakdale in 1833, then called the Chester & Centralia. Trains started running over the new track in 1892, three trains each way daily. With the curtailment of railway mail service, the size of the train diminished to a single car and locomotive, nicknamed “The Doodle Bug.” It made its last run on March 15, 1954. The road still does a flourishing freight business, but Oakdale no longer has a depot.

First all-weather road built out of Oakdale was in 1933, ran west. Second road was started in 1937, completed in 1938, ran southeast, crossing Route 127, then continuing east to DuBois. Third all-weather road led north to Route 460. The Oakdale-Coulterville blacktop was completed in 1954.

In World War I, John C. Atchison was the county’s first casualty. He was honored by having the Nashville Legion Post bear his name (see item elsewhere).

William Elliot died of influenza while in camp at Mooseheart, Illinois.

In World War II, Army pilot Curtis Torrens died over Foster Field, Texas, on July 20, 1942, when his plane exploded, to become the county’s first World War II casualty. (The Washington County Blue Book lists Pvt. Otto Stein of Lively Grove township as the first killed in action, which is correct, however Pvt. Torrens was the first war casualty).

S/Sgt. James Howard McClay died in action near the Rhine River, Germany, on December 19, 1944.

Dale Taft, ironically, was killed on D-Day.

Robert Craig was killed in France in February, 1945.

Elmer Shubert was killed in action on Leyte, in the Pacific theatre.

Schools: The first school was located on the John Hood farm, section 27. Another was built in Elkton the same year. When the town of Oakdale was surveyed, the R. P. Church was built in 1868 and school held in the basement. It remained so until a grade school was established in 1875. Two years later 50 pupils were enrolled, with J. C. Thompson, teacher. In 1892, there were two teachers, W. R. Maxwell and Miss Lizzie Ramsey. A two-year high school opened in 1922, increased to a three-year school in 1924, was discontinued twenty years later. A new grade school building was built in 1961, consolidation of the district having taken place in 1948. Ed Hudspeth was the first bus driver, starting from that date.

The U. S. Mail: The first mail delivered to Oakdale was brought without doubt by the post riders on horseback, and then picked up by the settlers. Wm. Ayers is thought to have kept some kind of post office in his pioneer store.

History tells us that in 1830, Thomas Bird established a post office at Ayers Point (later called Oakdale). Isaac Perlie, the first postmaster, came this same year.

Between this time and the date Oakdale was surveyed, it seems that post office service was discontinued. W. R. Ardery was postmaster in his store building in 1877, first reference to the resumption of mail service, Ray Kirkpatrick started in the Ardery building, 1911-13. Kirkpatrick built the building just west of the bank, and moved the postoffice there in 1913, where it remained for five years.

Agnes Maxwell was postmaster in a residential room where Chas. Brammeier now resides. Lester Guthrie had the office next in his drugstore (1922). Madge Guthrie served in same building (1927). Dalton Rohde, Jr. had the office in the front part of the Borcherding store in 1915. Ed Luczaj started here as postmaster, Dec. 1, 1947, then moved to the Woodside building in June, 1952, where he is postmaster at the present time.

Continued
Rural Mail Carriers: Alonzo Robertson carried mail from Oakdale to Elkton. Following Robertson, Lon Hunter carried it (star route). Hunter was also the first mail carrier after the rural free delivery was started, prior to 1905. Ed Reuter started in 1905, retired in 1935, Daulton Rohde Sr. served from Jan. 16, 1915 to Aug. 23, 1947. His son, Daulton Rohde, Jr., succeeded him, and is the present carrier.

A Few Firsts: Charley Bailey had the first car in Oakdale, a Stanley Steamer. Theo. Brown also was an early car owner, and before his death was in much demand as a man who could 'witch' both water and oil. Charles Huston had an International 2-cylinder, with solid rubber tires, carbide lights, rubber bulb horn (about 1905). Conrad Bassler purchased a similar car, later sold it to Dave Smith.

Lawrence Hood owned the first radio, about 1922. He also installed radios, the first one being a one-tube Crosley, at the Geo. Borchering home. John Kleinschmidt had the second set, an Atwater-Kent. Robert Osborn had the first 3-tube set that operated a loudspeaker. Arnold Wilson owned the first TV, back in 1943.

Doctors: Dr. A. D. W. Leavens, Dr. J. R. Ready, Dr. S. G. Arnett were the community's physicians (1879). Dr. H. L. Gault served here in the eighties. Dr. T. G. Tibby was here for some time, moved to Kansas in 1890, later returned. Dr. Geo. R. Hays served from 1890 to 1906. Dr. Th. F. McConaghy, 1905 to his death in 1939. (Thomas Fulton McConaghy was born near Oakdale Nov. 30, 1872, joined the U. P. Church in his youth. He attended Pleasant Hill rural school and Sparta high school. After a course at Normal University at Carbondale, he entered medical college at St. Louis U. Interspersed with his schooling he also taught in the Stone Church area for a time. Upon graduation in 1901 he started practice at Somonauk, Ill., then the following year bought the practice of Dr. Hayes at Oakdale and remained here the rest of his life. Few were the homes in this community that didn't at some time benefit by his ministry of healing).

Telephones: The year 1903 saw the first telephones in the community, and were locally owned. There was a gradual deterioration of service until 1953 when it was discontinued entirely. The community was without service until 1955 when the REA installed modern dial service. Following served as switchboard operators: John McKean, 1903-11; Mrs. Mary Jane Kirkpatrick, 1911-33; Chas. Brammeier, 1933-43; Albert Ihendahl, 1943-46; Mrs. Carol Krehr, 1947; John Brammeier, 1948; Ray Kirkpatrick to termination of service.

Electricity: The middle 1920s saw a few privately owned electric system, but it was not until October, 1930, that Illinois Power built a line into Oakdale. Later REA built power lines to serve the area farmers.

Veteran Mail Carrier: Daulton L. Rohde, Sr., began carrying mail on route 1 out of Oakdale on Jan. 16, 1915. The route ran to Elkton, Lively Grove, on to Casper's Point (also called Suzanne and Clapboard Town). From there it went north to the crossroads, east to what is now Route 153, thence to the township line, finally to Broad Hollow, past the Hibbard school, then south and east past Oakdale cemetery, back into Oakdale.

The winter of 1915 brought axle-deep mud, often requiring two teams daily to cover the 28-mile route. A sheephide was used on the floor of the wagon as a foot warmer, with a lighted lantern set under the laprobe to keep the carrier warm. By 1918, a car was used when the roads permitted. In 1934, when Edw. Reuter carried on route 2, and resigned, the two routes were thrown together, making it a 52-mile daily stint. Mr. Rohde carried mail for more than 32 years, his last trip on August 23, 1947. He died four days later.

Today this route, carried by Daulton Rohde, Jr., has 73 miles, 176 boxes, serving 196 families. Kenneth W. Hood is the assistant carrier.

Ball Park: After the Oakdale boys came home from World War II, they organized a softball team, played in the Nashville league for two seasons. Later they leased ground and established a ball diamond with flood lights. Play started here in 1917. They purchased a public address system in 1943. In 1950, the

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club purchased the six acres that now comprise the park. It was financed by donations, fish and chicken suppers that are now an annual affair. There are usually games at the park five nights a week, everyone cooperating in this worthwhile sport for both adults and children of the community.

Times Change! Back in 1937, the hitching racks at the W. C. Woodside store were lined with rigs, as farmers brought in their eggs, cream and chickens; often the store remained open for as late as 11 o'clock on two nights of the week. Mr. Woodside still runs this general store, however the appliance department has been acquired by Ed. Hudspeth.

It is interesting to note that when M. Fox was tax collector in 1883, the amount collected was $526.29 in the township.

When Herman and Orval Frieman purchased Charles Brammeier's garage and blacksmith shop in 1934, they got alcohol for cars in 5 gallon cans from Mascoutah. Business was slow. One day's sale amounted to a single gallon of kerosene, sold at 10c. The garage ran a special on gasoline, 7 gallons for a dollar.

The Camp Spring Milling Co. of Nashville opened a wheat buying station at Oakdale about 1890. Through a succession of different owners, the business is still operating. It is currently being operated as the Oakdale Grain Company.

Each community, before the turn of the century, had its village blacksmith. Oakdale had the well remembered George J. Decker, who came in 1906.

D. Rixman and four of his sons were the first to put the chain store idea into practice here, building and operating seven lumber yards, one of which was at Oakdale. The yard was sold in 1945 to a group of Nashville businessmen. Since 1956 the yard has been under the management of the Addievile Lumber Co.

The late Edward F. Reuter, who carried mail at Oakdale for thirty years, went through an era that took him from horseback, to mail buggy and finally to an automobile on his rural route. A good samaritan, he kept a diary of all the cherished events of his territory, including the exact number of births and deaths during his tenure as a carrier.

Among the store owners at Oakdale, down through the years, were Dave McClay, Morrison and McKeans, Dick Garnholz, Geo. Borcherding, a man by the name of Oats who later sold to Joe Maxwell; Dave Smith, Tom D. McClurkin, William and John Klein-schmidt, W. C. Woodside, A. J. Gamble. Lyle Torrens. First pioneer store was operated by Wm. Ayers.

Stuart Carson operated a restaurant here in the 1920's; Ralph Shreman once had a plumbing and tin shop here.

W. G. Ardery and a brother built a general store at Oakdale soon after the town was surveyed, back in 1879. A man named Smith operated a cream buying station, the building being destroyed by a fire when a stove exploded. This is the only building in the surveyed part of town destroyed by fire.

Once Oakdale had a Woodmen Hall, used for many years.

Farm Bureau's First President: Mr. J. R. Hood, father of Lawrence R. Hood, a co-editor of this book, was the first president of the Washington County Farm Bureau, elected in 1926, serving for three years. In those days the value of the county's farm crops ranked 67th among the 101 counties, with corn ranking 81st, wheat ninth. There were only 225 acres in soybeans in Washington County at that time. There were still 8480 horses in the county, with 13,390 milk cows.

Present Pastors: Rev. Charles Starrett is present pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and Rev. Philip Brunn at the United Presbyterian building.

Coincidently, three of Oakdale's merchants, all died within a short time of each other, John Klein-schmidt in 1937, Jack Gambill in 1938, and George Borcherding in 1939.

An annual Harvest Home Picnic that was started here in 1893 was held each summer for 53 years.


John Brammeier operated a blacksmith shop in the Frieman garage building from 1936 to 1946.

Nearby Elkton's present population is 25, representing a gradual decline over the years.

A tax receipt issued to Robert Keer, Pilot Knob township, in 1854 shows taxes for $1.07 for 80 acres of land. Ten years later it had jumped to $1.97.

The Oakdale Covenanter Church (Reformed Presbyterian) is one of four in Illinois, a single church at Chicago, one at Sparta and Houston. There are 62 in the nation.

When Elizabeth McClelland, wife of James McClelland took ill and died of cholera on Aug. 28, 1852, her husband had to bury her himself. Neighbors would bring food to the lane, but all were afraid of the dread disease. The husband and two daughters survived. The ruins of the old house in which she died is still standing, southwest of Oakdale.
Okawville’s medicinal springs also have a centennial, for the first small bath house, after the discovery of the springs, was built here in 1867. A larger Original Hotel followed, in 1871. It was destroyed by fire in 1892, and the present building shown here replaced it. It is the oldest, largest hotel-bath-house in the county.

The Washington Hotel, for years a friendly competitor, has been converted into the Washington Springs Nursing Home.

By analysis, the medicinal spring water of Okawville is almost identical to the water at the famous Arkansas spa.
The Lutheran Movement in Washington County

The Washington County Historical Society is indebted to Rev. P. F. Harre, pastor at New Minden, for this short biographical sketch of the Lutheran congregations within the county.

St. Salvador Lutheran, Venedy (1842)

German Lutherans settled in the vicinity of Venedy, then called Elkhorn Prairie, in 1933-39. They were interested in obtaining a Lutheran pastor. Occasional trips were made to St. Louis to sell their produce and buy supplies. On one of these trips they met members of a group of Saxon Lutherans who had come to St. Louis in 1839. Through these people they got in contact with Dr. F. C. Walther, who was instrumental in providing a pastor for them in the person of Rev. Ottomar Fuerbringer. Pastor Fuerbringer organized these Germans into a Lutheran congregation in 1840. The worship services were held in the village of Johannisburg, in a building that doubled for church and school. Dissension rose among the members on matters of Christian doctrine and practice; part of the congregation remained faithful to the Lutheran Confessions and seceded from this congregation in 1842, and organized the San Salvador Lutheran congregation in the village of Venedy.

St. John’s Lutheran, New Minden (1846)

Since 1810, Lutheran settlers had come to North Prairie, a farming area north of Nashville. They, too, sought the services of a Lutheran pastor. These people also made occasional trips to St. Louis for business purposes, and there made contact with the Saxon Lutherans. Through the services of Dr. F. C. Walther they obtained a pastor in the person of Rev. C. F. Scholz. The organization of St. John’s congregation was effected by Rev. Buenger of St. Louis, shortly before the coming of Pastor Scholz to New Minden in 1846.

Ebenezer Lutheran, Okawville (Grand Prairie—1853)

Quite a few of the members who belonged to the Venedy congregation lived on the east side of Elkhorn Creek, some at great distances, in those days of the horse and buggy. Other Lutherans settled even further east on the open prairie. These people organized a new congregation in what was known as Grand Prairie, 2 1/2 miles southwest of Okawville in 1853. This congregation was dissolved in 1948 when the membership joined with Venedy and Okawville Lutheran congregations.

St. Peter Lutheran, Nashville (Hahlen—1858)

Some members of the Ebenezer congregation lived as far distant as Plum Hill and beyond, much too far to attend church and school regularly. This group, with other Lutherans who had settled on farms southwest and west of Nashville combined and organized the St. Peter congregation at Hahlen in 1858.

Olive Branch Lutheran, Okawville (1865)

Lutherans living east of Okawville, holding membership in Ebenezer congregation southwest of there, found it very inconvenient to negotiate the distance to church and school at Ebenezer, and organized their own congregation, giving it the name of Olive Branch, in 1865. This tiny community was also called Frogtown.

St. Luke’s Lutheran, Covington (1884)

Quite a few members belonging to St. John’s congregation at New Minden who lived on the west side of Crooked Creek, frequently found muddy roads and a flooding creek a hindrance in attending school and church. This group, with members of the Olive Branch Lutheran congregation who lived north and northwest of Covington, decided to organize a new congregation at Covington. This organization was effected in 1884. They called the new church St. Luke’s.

Trinity Lutheran, Hoyleton (1867)

Lutherans in and near Hoyleton first held membership in St. John’s congregation at New Minden. As their numbers increased, they requested a peaceful release from the New Minden congregation to organize their own church at Hoyleton. Their request was granted, and the organization of Trinity Lutheran there took place in 1867.

Trinity Lutheran, Nashville (1887)

Some Lutherans had moved to Nashville and took out membership in St. Peter’s (Hahlen) southwest of

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the city. Others came, some from neighboring areas to spend their retirement years in Nashville; some for employment. All of them found it difficult to attend services regularly at St. Peter's, and to bring their children regularly to school there because of weather and roads. The pastor of St. Peter's began to conduct services in Nashville, and Trinity congregation was organized there in 1887 as an independent congregation.

Immanuel Lutheran, Okawville (1908)

Some members of Ebenezer congregation lived at Okawville, and others nearby. Members of Ebenezer and other nearby congregation members who had retired in Okawville found it difficult to drive out to Ebenezer church and school regularly, and requested the right to organize their own congregation in town. Their wish was granted and Immanuel Lutheran congregation was organized in 1908.
OKAWVILLE — VILLAGE AND TOWNSHIP

The first settlement in Okawville township was about 1825. Among the early pioneers were the Harrimans, Patmans, Wheelers, Galbraiths, Charters, Middletons, Morgans, Clarks, Johnsons, Kizers, Whites. Later another group settled here, the Staude, Hugh, Gavin and Adams families.

Evidently the first business man in Okawville precinct was Robert Hugh, who opened a store in his home in 1838. Early records state the location was “about one mile east of the present village.” Hugh sold staples such as coffee, tea, salt, sugar and whiskey, then regarded as a necessity for malaria and snakebite. Hugh, a Kentuckian, remained at this location three years. He had served in the Black Hawk War, and in 1841 moved northeast of Okawville, where he became an extensive landholder.

Although there are no records to prove it, the building shown here, the Blumenhorst Bakery, is the oldest commercial building in Okawville still in use. It is post the century mark. Other buildings entitled to the “old” tag is the Hohl building, once known as “The Blue Goose,” and Old Rock Inn. The Tschernor Mercantile building and the Kluke store building were also in the “old” category. Both have now been leveled.

Okawville township’s first church was erected in 1844, at a site then known as Morgan’s cemetery. The church building was later moved about a mile west and converted to a school. Among the first recorded deaths in the township was that of John Morgan, the man who donated the ground for the cemetery. It was supposed that he was the first man to be interred in his own cemetery. But when his grave was dug, they came upon a coffin of a previous burial.

The first steam mill was built by James Turnbolt, completed in 1845. It stood on a hill, east of the village, later passed into the hands of Jack McNeil, and he removed it to Mascoukah. A man named Alexander brought in the first crude reaper in 1839. James Garvin purchased the first buggy. James Lyons erected the first brick dwelling in 1847, making the bricks in his own kiln. The first saw mill went into operation in 1839. The first well dug in Okawville is now covered by the post office building.

The town of Okawville was laid out by James Garvin and James Davis in 1836. Prior to this time, the town was called Bridgeport. Among the men responsible for the growth of Okawville in the early days were Judge H. P. H. Morgan, Julius F. Zetzsche, Hy. Wiecke, Job Harryman, Herman Schulze, Green P. Harbin.

The community east of Plum Creek, now called Pinch, in the pioneer days was known as Okaw. At one time there were no less than seven bridges spanning the creek in the Okawville area.

Okawville once had three flour mills, plus a small custom mill. The Lammers mill was built about 1855. The Stone wall Jackson mill was erected on the Morgan land in Pinch during the Civil War era. The Harbke-Wright mill was near the site of the Original Hotel. The Lammers mill was later abandoned, and the others burned.

Before the advent of wells, cisterns and city water, pioneer residents of Okawville washed their clothing at a “wash-hole” in Plum Creek, located near the present site of the Route 177 highway bridge.

Rudolph Plege lived near the present site of the Original Hotel. When he dug a well, the high mineral content of the water was noted. Dr. James McIlwain, Sr. had the water analyzed, and it was found to be very similar to the famous Carlsbad waters of Europe. The small bath house that was started here at that time is a forerunner of the Original Mineral Springs hotel and bathhouse of today.

The Methodist Church was started during the Civil War years, and its unfinished walls were untouched until the war ended. Next came the St. Petri Evangelical Church, in 1864, followed by St. Barbara’s Catholic Church and lastly by Immanuel Lutheran.

Oldest business building in Okawville, until its razing several years ago was the annex to the north of the Tschernor Mercantile Building, also a memory. The Blumenhorst Bakery building is conceded as the village’s most ancient building today.

The Biedefelt hotel and store was located at the spot where the Washington Annex was later built (now the Washington Spring’s Nursing Home). The drug store and office of Dr. R. C. Poos stood just south of the present Old Rock Inn building. Dr. James McIlwain, Sr. and Dr. James McIlwain, Jr. had joint offices in what is now the Winkelmann building; Dr. H. Schmidt had an office in what is now the Pettersen Electric Shop.

In 1871 the half-cent piece was still in circulation, as attested by an order made out to William Kugler for road work in the amount of $17.37½. In 1874, the town purchased a carload of “sidewalk lumber,” attesting that the first walks were definitely not concrete. In 1876, S. C. Krebs charged the town one dollar for the use of his shop.

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for election purposes. In 1877, the board of trustees made a motion to appropriate $25 to purchase suitable fire-fighting equipment. Saloons for the first time were ordered to close on election day in 1877.

The Okawville of today is far removed from these pioneer efforts. An admirable place to live, its low tax rate and freedom from financial difficulties attest to sound management. Its fine schools and churches are comparable to big city life, with an added friendliness found only in the smaller town. Government consists of a mayor and six aldermen, a police department, a fire department. The town is served by Illinois Power Company, the Illini State Telephone Co., a city-owned water system, and a modern sanitary sewerage disposal system. Interstate 64 will soon augment its present highway outlets.

Its fine organizations include the Okawville Community Club, chartered in 1937; Okawville American Legion Post 233, chartered May 1921; Okawville American Legion Auxiliary, chartered June 1926; Washington County Barracks WW I, chartered in 1951; Washington County Barracks Auxiliary, Jan. 1959; Okawville Lions Club, Sept. 1930; Okawville PTA, May 1956; Okawville Women's Club, chartered in 1926.

**ST. ANTHONY'S CHURCH, LIVELY GROVE**

The Catholic Parish of St. Anthony’s at Lively Grove was started in 1868 at the time when its territory was under the Alton Diocese (Bishop Henry Junker), who was under the appointment of Pope Pius IX. The 1868 date is established by testimony of Rev. Wendelin Gillen.

Andrew Johnson was President of the United States. Only three years before, Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated.

St. Anthony’s Parish began when the pastor of St. Libory, Rev. Henry Jansen, made a recommendation that the Low Germans who resided in the Lively Grove area since 1860 should build their own church as they were complaining about the road leading to St. Libory Catholic Church to which parish these Catholics went to church each Sunday.

Up to 1868, the Catholic families of Lively Grove went to church at St. Libory, and after the pastor there recommended that the 17 families of Lively Grove build their own church, they did just that. This was the start of the parish of Lively Grove; 1868 was the date when this first church was built.

With aid from the St. Libory parish, the Lively Grove people built their own small wooden church which lasted 20 years. They also built a small frame school for $400. After 20 years, they turned this wooden church into a school and Sister’s residence combined. The Sisters of the Ruma Motherhouse taught in this parish from time to time up to 1963, when they left for other fields of work. The first school building had been removed from the scene at Lively Grove parish for some time.

The first Priest to have services in Lively Grove was Rev. Jansen, pastor of St. Libory, who took care of the new parish for the first year of its existence. His assistant, Fr. Tuerk, also helped out from time to time for Sunday Mass during the first year.

During the span of one hundred years of this parish, there were consistently about 15 families listed. During this century, approximately five children were born in the parish each year.

The first pastor to reside here was Father Homualer, who came in 1869 and built the first pastoral residence. It was a small frame building. Constructed in 1869; it no longer exists. The present pastor’s residence was built in 1902 by Rev. W. Gillen.

The Catholic school, which everyone in the Lively Grove area remembers, was built in 1912 during the pastorate of Rev. Wendelin Gillen. A sisters’ home was built also at this time. The school closed in 1963 and both this building and the sisters’ home were removed in 1965. The same year the new air-conditioned hall was constructed under the pastorate of Rev. Paul W. Stauder.

While all the old buildings have since been removed, there still stands in front of the present church (see photo) the two linden trees which Father Gillen planted there himself. He brought these trees from Germany 65 years ago.

The present brick church which towers over the corn fields of Lively Grove was built in 1887 under the pastorate of Rev. Longinus Quitter. At this time the Alton Dio-

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Bishop John Janssen was the first Bishop of this diocese (incidentally, not the same Father Janssen who was pastor at St. Libory and who recommended that Lively Grove have its own parish).

St. Anthony's is now under the spiritual leadership of Bishop Albert R. Zuroweste of Belleville, with Rev. Paul W. Stauder its pastor since 1963.

During its century of existence, Lively Grove parish has been authorized by the following Popes in Rome: Pope Pius IX, who authorized the parish to begin in 1863; Pope Leo XIII, Pope St. Pius X, Pope Benedict XV, Pope Pius XI, Pope Pius XII, Pope John XXIII and the present Holy Father, Pope Paul.

The following priests have served Lively Grove: Rev. Henry Jansen, pastor of St. Libory, with his assistant, Rev. Tuerk; Rev. Rosmueller, Rev. A. Busch (buried in the adjacent cemetery); Rev. Carl Roesner; Rev. Longinus Quitter (who built the present church and also is buried in the cemetery); Rev. B. Reusch, Rev. Wendelin Gillen (who built the present rectory); Rev. Clemens Bellmann, Rev. Henry Alberg, Rev. John Jantzen, Rev. Bernard Kunkel, Rev. John Jantzen, Rev. Edwin Arentsen, Rev. Melvin Haas, and Rev. Paul W. Stauder, who built the new hall in 1965.

Many of the pioneers of this parish have gone to their eternal reward. Their remains lie buried in the cemetery beside the church. Many of these people with their own hands helped build the present church. I'm sure that when the first member of this small parish was buried in the cemetery, Sophie Maxander by name, whose tombstone stands as evidence of her death in 1870, little did the people of this community think that this parish would survive one hundred years. May all the souls of the pioneers rest in peace, and may the present living witnesses of this church and God's truth carry the torch farther so that we in our generation can say that we took our turn in history to bridge the gap between our forefathers and our successors and continued the span of time for great things to come in the future for this community of Lively Grove.

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Stone Church ... A Thumbnail Sketch

Today, Stone Church is a small, unincorporated community of less than a dozen houses, centered about its modern E. & R. Church. Once there was a large store, a creamery, a blacksmith. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Jasper started a general merchandise store there in 1877, moving into a building owned by the Zerse Brothers. They conducted the store for 55 consecutive years, surely a record of note. Before the rural mail service, a post office was also operated in the store. Mr. William Fox, who operated the creamery, also brought the mail from the I. & N trains at Venedy Station to the Jasper store for distribution.

This hamlet in southwest Washington County was first known as Elkhorn Prairie. Later the name was changed to Petersburg, a short-lived appellation because a town was already claiming that name, farther upstate. The final change gave the community the name, Stone Church. Its first church building, which was later gutted by fire, was of native stone, erected in 1858, so the new name was fitting to say the least.

Despite its physical smallness, the Stone Church community had a native son who won world-wide prominence, the late General Walter Krueger, who commanded the Sixth Army in the Pacific during World War II, and won the Distinguished Service Cross for his enviable record. Mrs. Fred Runge (the late Annie Jasper) recalled that General Krueger came to the Stone Church community as a boy, with his mother, a sister and a brother, from Germany. The family lived there for about eight years, and he was confirmed in the local church, after which they moved to Indiana. Krueger and General Douglas MacArthur were bosom friends of more than 40 years' standing.
CROPS — PAST AND PRESENT

As always, throughout the timbered sections of the Midwest, the first crop was corn, food for man and beast. Often it was planted between stumps by hand, the source of meal, hominy, the grains parched, and the green ear for corn-on-the-cob.

As clearings expanded and more horsepower, or ox-power, was available, wheat was grown for a cash crop. But first there had to be a market, often as far distant as 75 miles, reached by wagon trails only.

Conditioning the land for crops continued. As more animal power and simple tools were available, the pioneers in this county also grew cotton, hemp, and finally oats for livestock feed. Between 1840 and the Civil War, horse-drawn tools were greatly developed. The first mowers or reapers and sulky plows showed up and farming was no longer merely for subsistence but became an industry. After the Civil War, even bigger and better horse drawn implements appeared. More prairie was put under cultivation. Cotton disappeared, oats became very important for increasing horsepower fuel; then rye and syrup sorghum as well as cowpeas first appeared on the scene.

From then until about 1930, the three big crops in Washington County were soft red winter wheat, oats and corn, but livestock hay was important too. Cotton and hemp entirely disappeared, rye remained minor. The hay was first wild grass, then came timothy, redtop, red clover and cowpeas.

In this period there were two fruits grown quite extensively, apples and pears. Both fruits were dried, made into cider and butter. The wheat varieties included Red Sea, Turkey Red and later Fultz. In corn, the dent replaced the flint and it was often strawberry, Reid’s yellow dent, Bloody butcher, Boone county white. Oats was black, white or red. From 1900, dairying grew in importance each year. Both corn and sunflowers were grown for silage, and alfalfa first appeared as a hay crop. Dairying reached its peak in the 1930s.

This period also marked the first big effort at fruit growing. winter apples, peaches and strawberries, all of which grew in importance until about 1925, when a gradual decline started.

These years also marked the introduction of the soybean as a hay crop only. Liming the soil was started by a few experimenting farmers, and the first tractors appeared. Cowpeas outdistanced some of the minor hay crops. Extensively grown in the county were New Era, Whippoorwill and the Clay varieties. Another crop that had quite a vogue from about 1890 to 1900 was the castor bean, grown mostly for its oil.

The introduction of Missouri Beardless harley led to a rapid increase of that crop in the 1930s for stock feed. Today very little is grown. The coming of better tractors and implements, and the combine as well, soon got rid of the horse as a work animal, and with it went the oats crops. The cowpea declined, and although this county developed a special market for seed along the Atlantic coast, that too declined and by 1915 a cowpea field was a rarity. Timothy hay also disappeared with the horse, leaving red clover and alfalfa as the hays for dairying.

After 1930, hybrid yellow dent corn replaced all other corn. Sorgo became fairly important for silage, augmenting corn. Sunflowers as a silage crop and poultry feed practically disappeared as a farm crop. After the second world war, dwarf milo maize, a grain sorghum that can be combined, became an important crop for livestock feed, but is now on the decline. Mung Beans, grown quite extensively in several townships, has also declined. (In case you don’t recognize the name, this is the type of bean so important in Chinese cookery, the bean sprout). Syrup sorghum in the county practically disappeared after 1950. This also is true of oats, cowpeas, hay soybeans, timothy and rye.

Sweet clover was introduced as a honey plant in the 1900s. In the 1920s it came into great prominence as a “plow under” soil improvement crop. Lespedeza was grown a great deal for both soil improvement and hay but has about passed from the scene. Two pasture grasses have achieved some use since 1915, fescue and homegrass. As of this year (1967) the three big crops are hybrid yellow dent corn, light colored oil soybeans and soft winter wheat. New and improved varieties are now much more frequently brought into general use for some specific reason, and certain varieties often pass from the scene in a few years. All other crops have either disappeared entirely, or have become very minor in either acreage or value.
ADDIEVILLE NAMED AFTER WOMAN

The village of Addieville, centrally located in Washington County, on the L & N railroad and state route 15, was named after a woman, Mrs. Addie Morrison, whose husband donated the land upon which the town was built.

Addieville is a residential community, its well kept homes and good streets is a mark of its German heritage. Population-wise, the village has seen little fluctuation. The 1930 census showed 283 people; the 1940, 272; the 1950, the same; the 1960, 231.

Its local school, now being expanded, is a consolidation, comprises the former districts: Grattendiek 46, Half Acre 68; part of Black Jack 69; east part of Zetsche 63; east part of Helbig 64, now all incorporated into the parent district 47.

Life in the community centers about its spacious church, Zion E. and R. and its companion church hall, used for various parish activities. Rev. Kenneth Kramer is resident pastor.

The Gaebel Elevator has been a landmark at Addieville since 1883, founded by the late Henry and John H. Gaebel. Senior citizens still remember the popular Bouquet brand of flour made here, widely sold up and down the L & N. Making of flour was discontinued in 1945.

Ben H. Gaebel is mayor of the community.

The memory of the late John Meyer, Sr., Washington County's last Civil War veteran, still lingers in the minds of many Addievillians. Meyer was noted for his auto driving facility, even past the age of 90. Dr. L. P. Schroeder was a doctor at Addieville for more than forty years. Another well remembered physician, Dr. H. Schmidt, later moved to Okawville.

One of the photos illustrating this article shows the L & N depot at Addieville, long a landmark. But by the time this book sees print, the depot will get the axe, according to present plans of the railroad.
The late Emil Mottert of Hoyleton, pictured here, won national acclaim in a very unusual way. Mr. Mottert ran a shoe repair shop, was a hobbyist of great patience and skill. In his spare time, he made musical instruments out of outlandish material. For instance, the violin pictured here, was made of toothpicks. Thousands of ordinary toothpicks, all glued into a solid. The saxophone was made of cornstalks. Mottert also made various other instruments of equally "different" materials, a bass fiddle from a bull's hide, a mandolin from a gourd, and a flute from a pig's windpipe.

His fame spread to Hollywood. Paramount News sent a camera and sound crew to Hoyleton, to photograph Mottert playing his unusual instruments. Later, the newsreel, in color, had a "world premiere" at the Main Theatre at Okawville.

Later, the world-renowned Robert Ripley of "Believe It or Not" fame, accepted Mr. Mottert's unusual musical instruments for permanent exhibition in the Ripley Museum in Florida.
Only Indian Atrocity in County

The Massacre at Lively Spring

People travel far to visit historic shrines, monuments and memorials, traverse a dozen states to stand at the foot of a mountain, a canyon, or a waterfall, yet paradoxically, only a very few people of Washington County have seen the memorial that for years has marked the site of the massacre of the John Lively family near Covington.

Lively Spring, much the same today as it was back in 1810 when it was used by the Lively-Huggins family for their water supply.

There is a reason for the above statement. All through the years, since the monument was erected 30 years ago, only an indistinct foot-trail led to the spot, a condition the Washington County Historical Society hopes to amend shortly.

Lively Spring, the site of the massacre, is located east of Covington, north of Crooked Creek. Roughly the spot is almost due east from the Covington quarry.

Forget the present for a moment and let us grow reminiscent. Picture a hilly woodland of scrub oak and elm, ash and hickory, with a good-sized creek meandering through the valley. Even today it is as isolated as it was in 1810, when upon the slope facing the spring, a new settler’s mud-chinked cabin greeted the morning sun.

Historians differ on the Lively story and much must be left to the imagination. But here is the gist of the much-told tale.

Two brothers-in-law, John Lively and David Huggins, residing in Randolph county, decided in 1810 they would move eastward to find better grazing for their expanding herds of livestock. They were hardy pioneers, industrious and unafraid.

The place decided upon was near Crooked Creek, about two miles above the spot where the creek empties into the Kaskaskia river. The country was rolling timberland, interspersed with grassy prairies. A nearby spring provided ample drinking water. Here they built their log homes and barns, planted their small fields and began the busy life of a pioneer homesteader.

Always there was the fear of an Indian uprising, but both Lively and Huggins were unafraid, relying on their guns and dogs. Nearby was an Indian trace, over which roving bands traveled north and south, but the

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two pioneers disregarded any signs of danger at the time.

In the spring of 1813 it became evident that trouble with Indians was inevitable. For a time they were afforded protection by a small company of Rangers, but after a time this proved to be inadequate, and both Lively and Huggins began to discuss plans to move back to Randolph county.

Remember, at this time these two families were the only settlers within the county. At last Huggins decided to leave, but Lively said he would stay, despite the fact that the nearest settlers were at Shoal Creek, to the northeast, and Hill's Station, to the south. With Lively and his wife was a hired man, plus the four children, two sons and two daughters.

After the Huggins family left, Lively lived unmolested at the spring. He had a corral into which he nightly drove his livestock. In July, the stock began to grow restless, and Lively realized prowling Indians were the cause. He decided to move out at once and sent the hired man and one son to round up the livestock.

The hired man and the boy had gone only a short distance when they heard the sound of shots and yells of Indians. From the edge of the forest they saw the carnage taking place, the burning of the buildings, the death of the family. The hired man and the one Lively boy made their escape, finally getting help from the rangers, who returned to the spot, buried the bodies, and pursued the Indians to a place called Buckingham Branch, where they were supposedly killed.

With the Indian trouble seemingly over, David Huggins and his family returned to the spring in 1816, and lived out their days there. He left a large family.

As long as people can remember, the site of the massacre has been known as Lively Spring. The cabin sites are here, several marked graves, an old Indian wash pond, and the spring, still gushing forth clear water.

Historians differ, too, as to which tribe killed the Lively family. The Illini were five tribes in a federation, the Tamaroa, the Michigamies, Kaskaskias, Peorias and Cahokias. The red men frequenting this section were also known as the Meadow Indians. The Sacs and Foxes, farther to the north, were marauding redskins, and it is possible that a war party of this nation dipped this far south to test the mettle of its warriors.

The tablet marking the site of the massacre was designed by the late Oren Brandis of Nashville. Funds were raised by public subscription. Recently Nashville Boy Scouts cleaned the site, an act that is commendable.
RELIC OF ANOTHER DEFENSE PROGRAM

Arthur Lehde of Beaucoup, writing in the Nashville Journal, at the time that newspaper was so ably edited by Joseph B. Campbell, has this to say about the old Phillips blockhouse, southeast of Nashville:

During the next three years several families made Beaucoup the nucleus of settlement, but even in this community numerically the strongest in the county, the pioneers were extremely Indian conscious. Noting this apprehensiveness, Col. John Phillips, who located in 1819 just west of one of the much used trails of the day, built in addition to his home and log barn a sturdy stone blockhouse which went a long way toward convincing the red-skinned warriors that the white men had come to stay, and that if fight them they must, they were prepared to do so.

Fashioned from irregular shaped blocks of the slabby limestone found outcropping in nearby streams and cemented with mortar made from lime burned at a surface lime-burning kiln located in the timber several hundred yards from the Phillips home, the blockhouse was truly a remarkable piece of masonry.

The walls of the structure which is about 16 feet long and 15 feet wide, are 18 inches thick and are made of three vertical layers of limestone. Passing through each of the side walls at an angle of 30 degrees are 13 shoulder-high loopholes; nine others pierce the end wall at more nearly a right angle. Another row of holes 18 inches above the side loopholes was evidently put there for the purpose of ventilation since the blockhouse has no windows and only one door.

This doorway, still framed by the original hand-hewn oak timbers, was strategically placed only a few feet from the rear door of the house. Moreover, the heavy blockhouse door was hung in such a way that it afforded protection to anyone drawing water from a well only a step outside the doorway. Thus insured, in the event of a siege, an adequate

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The blockhouse itself, back in 1954, when it was still intact. One of two wells was under the porch. Notice both the gun loopholes and the ventilation openings in the walls.

Half-hidden in the high weeds surrounding a vacant farm house two miles south and west of Beaucoup, there remains a mute reminder of the defense program of more than a century ago — a thick-walled grayish-tan stone blockhouse. Since late in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, its 37 shoulder-high loopholes have stared — their gaze transfixed in stone — across the surrounding countryside as if seeking the whereabouts of some lurking red-skinned savage. It was this blockhouse that, approximately 120 years ago, made it possible for the earliest white settlers to establish their homes in what was then a hostile Indian country.

At that time the Indian menace here was especially pronounced because Washington County was not only the home of several Indian tribes, but was passed through by trails which Indians living to the east and south used on their journeys to either Fort Kaskaskia or Fort St. Louis on the Mississippi river. Common to both the native and transient Indians was the feeling that white men, coming from the East where the Great Spirit lifted the dawn, had come to push the Indians back, to cut off the timber and plow the prairies, to destroy the hunting grounds, and to otherwise glut the treasures of the earth.

All of these things the red men resented and bitterly opposed. Often their resentment led to such brutal and bloody massacres as the Lively killing in 1813 in which five members of that family residing in the northwestern part of the county, lost their lives. Temporarily this massacre halted the tide of white immigration into Washington County, a tide that was resumed with renewed vigor in 1817.

Today the old blockhouse is all but gone. The one corner of the walls still standing is being examined by Randy Jones, St. Clair County historian.
The Phillips residence, to the south of the blockhouse is entirely gone today. This photo was taken about 25 years ago.

supply of water at all times was within reach. And since the Phillips family used the blockhouse as a smokehouse it was always amply provisioned.

When fully garrisoned with a rifleman at each of its 37 loopholes, this structure, sturdy enough to resist the elements for well over a century, was doubtless well nigh impregnable, especially when it is remembered that any potential attacker in that day, red or white, would have been armed with a bow and arrow or the long muskets of the frontiersmen.

There is no record of this blockhouse ever having been used in a battle, a fact which is inconsequential because it served its purpose in giving the white man a sense of security in a frontier region, and it fully convinced the Indians of the futility of carrying on warfare against such heavy odds.

With the passing of the Indian menace and the coming of more pioneer families, the importance of the old blockhouse naturally dwindled. Some years after it was no longer needed as a fort, its loopholes were plastered shut on the inside with mortar and clay. Thereafter it was used only as a smokehouse.

(Editor’s Note: Today, as the photos show, the old blockhouse is just about gone, a deplorable fact, for here is a landmark that had vast possibilities at restoration. In fact, it is the only ruin within Washington County that has a direct relationship to the county’s earliest days when two enemies were present, the red man and the land itself.)

The huge log barn stood to the northeast of the dwelling and blockhouse, possibly one hundred feet distant. Today it is nothing but a ruin, although some of the hand-adzed logs are in a remarkable state of soundness, dry, hard, unrotted.

The Washington County Tuberculosis Association

In researching the very creditable work of the Washington County Tuberculosis Association, an interesting statistic was revealed: Washington County is second highest in the state in percentage of residents past age 65. So it would seem that if you wish to live long, live in this county.

The Washington County Tuberculosis Association was organized on June 5, 1941 by citizens concerned with the report that, based on the county’s tuberculosis death rate, it probably had as many as 25 active TB cases in need of care.

The major aim of the association is to interest the general public in the solution of the TB problem for its own protection. A Tuberculosis Tax promotion in the county was adopted November 3, 1942.

The subsequent program of the association includes: TB education in schools, grades 8-12 inclusive; general education on TB; tuberculin testing with emphasis on adults; maintaining a reactor register. Incidentally the county was one of the first to set up and maintain this service, and has been given state honors repeatedly.

The Washington County Tuberculosis Sanatorium Board was organized on December 9, 1942. It consists of three members, appointed by the County Board of Supervisors.

Its responsibility: to administer the tuberculosis tax to provide sanatorium care for tuberculosis patients; chest X-rays for reactors to tuberculosis; after-care for patients discharged from the sanatorium; and prophylactic medication for the infected when indicated.

The editors of this volume salute the dedicated men and women who have made this health program possible within this county, maintaining and building it stronger, down through the years.
HISTORY OF PILOT KNOB PRECINCT

Pilot Knob precinct takes its name from the high hill or knob which is situated near its center. It is well watered and drained by Locust Creek. It is one of the oldest settled portions of Washington County. The first settlement was in 1818, and the first settler was John Rainey, who settled on the old Hood place, west of the Knob. In the same year, James Gordon settled on the Rainey place, Rainey and Gordon were the only settlers until 1819, when a man named Affleck settled at Three Mile Prairie, but remained but a short time. Benjamin Bruten settled at the same prairie in 1819, from which it took its name, being known as Bruten's Prairie for many years afterward. William Minson settled there at about the same time.

This photo, token in 1939, shows Oak Grove cemetery, on the old Nashville-Pinckneyville road, where the oil boom started.

In 1832 Robert Burns settled north of Locust Creek point; James Gordon near the Lane place, and John Franklin the old James Adams place. In 1833, Alexander Hodge, Jonathan King and Col. M. Hall settled near the knob, and in 1830 the McElhanon family came from Randolph county and settled here. The Maxwells came about the same time. Very few of these old families remained in the precinct. In 1837 the Hutchings came, and in 1836 Hugh Adams made a permanent settlement. The first school house was built in 1834, on section 27. It was the traditional log building with puncheon floors and greased skins for lights. The first school teacher was Horatio Burns. The first spread of the gospel was made by Methodist circuit riders in 1833, preaching being held at the home of settlers. The Baptists built the first house of worship in 1852; it burned in 1870 and was rebuilt in 1872, known as Concord Baptist Church. The first marriage was that of John Crane and Mary Gordon in 1832. Wm. Rainey was the first storekeeper, starting in 1835, selling the usual staple articles, which included whiskey, then regarded as a necessity.

Robert Curreck brought in the first reaper in 1854. First horse mill to grind wheat and corn was erected by Richard Cole in 1835, Joseph Bradshaw was the first physician.

In the late 1800s, Pilot Knob was divided into four sections, determined by geographical terrain. Cordes Prairie was the northwest portion of the township, Oakdale Prairie the southwest; the south part to the east was known as Three Mile Prairie. The northeast portion of the township was known as Locust Creek Point, or merely “The Point,” having derived its name from that portion of land that was cut off from the rest of the township by Locust Creek.

Cordes was the only town in the township, deriving its name from the siding on the M. and I. railroad. Once this community had a store, a blacksmith shop and a church. The siding was used in the early part of the century to bring limestone, feeds and other commodities to the trading area.

The early settlers were of German, Polish and Irish descent, all conservative, and very religious. They cleared their land and were among the first to make extensive use of limestone as a soil builder. Today it ranks as one of the three highest in the county in dairying.

Pilot Knob presently is in two grade school districts, the west half in Oakdale District 1, and the east half in Nashville Consolidated 19. All of the township is in Community High School District 99, and the Kaskaskia Junior College area.

The township, located within one-half mile of the Washington County Conservation and Recreational lake district, is serviced by Illinois Power Company and REA Tri-County Electric Cooperative for electricity; and Illinois Bell and Egyptian Telephone Cooperative for telephones. The oil revenues in the township has contributed substantially to the economy during the past 25 years.

Three years ago, AT&T erected a large communication tower alongside the Oakdale blacktop (see article elsewhere), which contributes to the economy with an assessed value of over $100,000. The Oscar Decker and Son orchard, only one in the township, has been in operation since 1890, with over 1500 apple and peach trees.

The township is partially in the Park District and the Rural Fire District; and all in the Washington County Hospital District. Its population in 1960 was 361, with 214 registered voters.

An old landmark remembered by pioneers was the Lueker blacksmith shop on the old Pinckneyville-Nashville road, about a mile north of the Perry County line. The shop was started by Mr. Fred Lueker, Sr. in 1887 and served the area until 1921. The first post office was also at this point.  

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Oldest farm home in the township is the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Buhrman. The 160-acre tract of land on which the home stands was claimed from the government on April 21, 1820 by Hugh Adams, with more acreage acquired later. The house was built about 1830 with an interlocking sandstone foundation. The two-story brick house has outside walls varying in thickness from 12 to 16 inches. Bricks at the time were hauled from St. Louis by horse and wagon. Its location is on the old Nashville-Pinnekeville road, a quarter of a mile south of Oak Grove cemetery.

Later this land was purchased by the late R. B. Holston's father and is now owned by his grandchildren, the Holston-Watts heirs. In the fall of 1855, Fred and Wilhelminia Buhrman and their eight children moved from North Prairie to this farm. They were the grandparents of Fred Buhrman who now resides here. Three generations of the Buhrman and Holston family have been tenants and landlords here for more than 50 years. Fred and Lottie Buhrman are the third generation living here, since their marriage 32 years ago.

The Churches: St. John's Evangelical Church of Cordes Prairie was founded in the early 1890s and dissolved in the mid-thirties. Later the church was sold and St. John's Cemetery Association formed, including members of St. Luke's Evangelical Church of Nashville Prairie, which has previously dissolved. After dissolution, the Cordes membership joined St. Paul's at Nashville, St. John's at Plum Hill or United Presbyterian at Oakdale.

Concord Baptist: At the close of the Black Hawk war, eliminating threat of Indian trouble, pioneers came into southern Illinois. Wm. Hutchings was one of the early pioneers in Perry county and an elder son, John R. Hutchings later moved to a community then called Round Prairie, near the northern border of the county. A brother-in-law, Thomas H. B. Jones, settled at Three Mile at about the same time. These two men, feeling the need of Baptist teaching in the fall of 1841, called Peter Hagler, then residing some 18 miles south of this community, to hold a revival. Early records show that there were six charter members of the newly-organized Concord Church: John R. Hutchings and wife, Thomas H. B. Jones and wife and J. Stilley and his sister-in-law, John R. Hutchings was the first pastor, Eli Hutchings gave land for the cemetery and W. W. Hutchings donated the church site plot. The initial church was a small log building which was destroyed by fire and replaced with a frame structure. A third, still larger church was later built, served until 1924.

Reminiscing about the early days of the church, it is interesting to note that the families did not sit together as they do today. Men entered at one door, women at another; they sat on opposite sides of the room. Stoves were two box stoves that burned wood. The singing was different also. The preacher would read one line, then the people would sing it. Usually there were more ox teams and wagons in the church yard than cars today. Straw was put in the wagon beds to keep the people warm. They came from miles around to attend services; those who did not have rigs, walked, often carrying their good shoes, which were not put on until they reached the church. By the turn of the century, newcomers to the area were non-Baptist, and slowly the church lost its membership. In 1924 it moved to a new location at Rice.

Oak Grove Presbyterian: Members of this organization were taken entirely from the roll of the Nashville Presbyterian Church, mainly the families of Hugh Adams, J. Duncan, J. Wilson, Mrs. Anderson, John Boyle and George Henderson, a total of 25. Preaching by Presbyterian ministers had been kept up at the residence of Hugh Adams for over 30 years. A church building was erected, dedicated in the fall of 1872, was discontinued in 1911, the plat deeded to the Oak Grove Cemetery Association. For some time the old building served for funerals and special meetings, then was dismantled in the summer of 1925.

Rural Schools: There were five rural districts in Pilot Knob township, Luney district 57, where the land was acquired from Robert and Margaret Luney in 1839. The first building here burned. In 1948 the district was consolidated with Oakdale.

Kerr district 56, where the land was acquired from Iverson Jones in 1856. This school was known as the Central School until the turn of the century when the name was changed to Kerr. It, too, consolidated in 1948.

Adams district 55, where the land was acquired from John C. Elwell in 1870. The first school was a log building dubbed "Log College." A second building was built in later years. District is now consolidated with Nashville. The building is now owned by the township, serves as a town hall.

Dolly Varden district 60, located on the Pilot Knob-Bolo township line; land was acquired from Amos and Rebecca Flaxbeard in 1835. Now annexed to Nashville.

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Slade district 59 was the first school in the township, a subscription school. The log building was named after Jack Slade, who owned the land before it was later acquired from David H. and Mary Boyle in 1886. Slade was the last school to annex to Nashville in 1950.

It is interesting to note that before the free school system, the only method of learning was the subscription school. If the parent couldn’t afford to pay, there was no school for his children. At that time most of the land in the township was worth about $4 per acre. A good teacher earned possibly $30 a month. Most of them were limited in knowledge as well. The subscription school usually was a log building, about 20x24 feet. Seats were split logs. Stake-and-rider fences were used almost exclusively to enclose farm land. The Bible was usually used as a text book in many of these early schools.

Township Government: First records of Pilot Knob township government date back to 1833, when Wm. Miller was the first supervisor and Thomas Kerr the first town clerk. Money was very short, and the township roads were allotted as little as $200 yearly for their upkeep. Then when the oil boom hit Pilot Knob county, it enabled the road commissioners to buy a caterpillar motor grader out of tax funds, and today the township has some of the finest roads in the county.

Oil Boom: The year of 1939 was the year of the big oil strike, when the famous “Cemetery Field,” south of Nashville was stretching south for miles, with new wells going down at the rate of 30 to 40 monthly. Such names as Blankenship, Cochran and Hubbard were suddenly household words. The scene of Oak Grove cemetery, after the strike, was a country road with cars parked bumper to bumper for miles as thousands of spectators crowded into the area to see the oil strikes. Today, 28 years later, the field is still on the pump, although tapering off to a marked degree.

The Illinois Agricultural College at Irvington

In the present tumult about Federal aid to education, it may surprise some to learn that Federal aid to education (with some strings attached) began well over 150 years ago. In 1816, the government with benevolent paternalism donated an entire township to the Territory of Illinois, to be used only for establishment of colleges or seminaries, and on entering statehood another township was presented in like manner.

Our early politicians, taking rather a dim view of education in general, perhaps because of the pro-slavery leanings of many of them, immediately proceeded to sell these townships at the sacrifice price of $1.25 per acre to get some ready cash easy to their hands. They placed the nearly $60,000 thus acquired in a general education fund, and then proceeded to borrow from it for general state use at a very low interest rate.

It may also be a little surprising that people with some interest in general education got organized and proceeded to do some very effective lobbying by 1830. Leaders in this activity were not only the rather few teachers and professors in the state but a number of prominent leaders of several churches, as well as one politician of note, Judge Sidney Breese, and later on, the Prairie Farmer, as well as an organization called the Industrial League of Illinois.

Beginning in 1833, these groups staged a yearly educational convention in the state capitol at Vandalia, and apparently made it hot for the legislators. In 1854 they won their first victory, the creation of the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Then in 1855 they won passage of the bill which created public schools in Illinois. They had other goals as well, a state agricultural school, a state normal school for training teachers.

In 1861 they attained the agricultural school when the legislature created the Illinois Agricultural College. Nine men were named trustees of a corporation chartered for the purpose of instruction in science and agriculture, practical and scientific, as well as the mechanical arts. The capital stock was fixed at $50,000 in shares of $100 each. The legislature also discovered that 1 1/2 sections of the long-ago federal college gift-land remained unsold in Iroquois County, and it was turned over to the corporation. They also provided for the corporation to make a full biennial report to the legislature when in session: financial position, progress, number of pupils and the residence of each.

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The Catholic Church in Washington County

Although a Catholic edifice was not the first religious building to be built in Washington County, Catholicism itself was administered as a religion by the Jesuits in the Illinois Country long before any other group started a Protestant Church. Evidently these same French voyageurs used the Kaskaskia River on the north borderline of the county as their "highway" long before the first white family permanently settled in the area that later became this county.

Today there are Catholic Churches at Nashville, Okawville, DuBois, Posen, Radom and Lively Grove. The aged frame church building at Posen has recently been razed to make way for a new brick structure.

St. Barbara's (Okawville): The early Catholic settlers, mostly immigrants from Germany and Ireland, arrived about 1860. The nearest Mass at that time was at St. Libory. In the group were such family names as Schlich, Trost, Reitz, Flauaas, McLaughlin, Rossel, Hughes, Koch, Wier, Voegele, Stuebe, Schott, Helfisch, Sommer, Neunlist and several others. The settlement in 1867 was attended by H. Jansen of St. Libory, who celebrated Mass in the home of John Reitz, a practice that was continued until a church was built.

The first resident pastor at Okawville was Ferdinand Mumborn, who moved here from Mt. Vernon on May 30, 1901. He was succeeded by Henry Althoff on October 26, 1905. The first Catholic Church, a brick structure that seated 125, was erected in 1868 at a cost of $500. It was remodeled later at a cost of $700. A new bell was a gift of C. Eschmann. In 1907 the church was reroofed and frescoed.

St. Barbara's new Catholic Church (the current building) was dedicated on October 15, 1921, when the Rt. Rev. Henry Althoff, Bishop of the Belleville Diocese, and a former pastor of this parish, conducted the services. It was quite an undertaking for a congregation of only 13 families to erect a church costing $20,000, all of which is paid or pledged.
GEORGETOWN VERSUS NASHVILLE

When Clinton County was separated from Washington in 1827, it was decided to move the county seat nearer the center of the newly-mapped county. The commissioners chose a spot about four miles west of Nashville, to be called Georgetown. But all the new “town” ever had was a flagpole, two wells and some platted lots. The county seat continued at Covington.

By this time the county was fast being settled and this auspicious effort to create a new town created a lot of dissatisfaction. It seems that the landowners at Georgetown expected to make a killing, but only produced a fizzle. There also arose a heated rivalry between the two largest settlements, Beaucoup and Elkhorn, and politicians had to tread warily on the county seat issue. Here the enterprising settlers of the central section proposed they lay out a town and make it the county seat. The first to settle were Tennesseans and they proposed the name, New Nashville. Their problem was: how to raise enough money to buy the government owned land. The stupendous sum needed was $100., almost as much as was collected in taxes in the county’s first year of existence.

This is downtown Nashville, after the disastrous fire of 1912. (Taken from an old postcard).

When a money-raising delegation journeyed south three miles to the cabin of David Pulliam, who was reported as a man with cash on hand, perhaps the men got too insistent in their entreaty for financial help. For at last Pulliam threw his old hat on the ground, exclaiming: “I wouldn’t give my old hat for all Nashville will ever be!”

Pulliam didn’t help, but Robert Middleton and Wm. G. Brown of St. Clair county did. They journeyed to Kaskaskia, purchased the ground from the government, and had a surveyor, A. W. Casad lay out the town. The date was June 8, 1830. Twenty acres was donated for county use, and a free lot was offered to the first man who would build a home. Sam Anderson hauled in an old log cabin from the woods, but the judges ruled him out and gave the prize to the Rev. Greenish Fisher who in the meantime threw up a two-story dwelling. Sometime later he opened the first store, on the site of the present William Motor Sales building.

The county commissioners then moved the county seat from Covington to Nashville, and contracted with Thomas Moore to build a courthouse, which lasted ten years. A little later, N. Mitchell began another store which he soon sold to John Wood. Later, Wood with fifty other men from the county, were mustered in to help fight the Black Hawk War. He returned as Major Woods.

The Methodists started their church in 1832. The year before, the town’s first physician arrived, Dr. Maxwell Pepper, who also served in the Black Hawk War as company surgeon. Joseph Dennis started the first hotel on two lots for which he paid $15. In 1833 Zenas Vernor opened the first blacksmith shop, and David Ramsey the first tannery. The next year, Wood and Mitchell also opened a wool carding mill, and Stephen Gaston began operating his cotton gin. A little later, Murphy and Watts opened their grist mill on what is now the corner of Kaskaskia and Chester streets.

The first child, a son, was born to Mr. and Mrs. David Underwood in 1832. The first school teacher was Rev. Horatio Burns, who also had the distinction of being the first bridegroom in the precinct, his bride being Mrs. Martha Morgan. But the first marriage in Nashville was that of John Woods’ daughter, Susan, and Mr. Champness Ball. The first attorney was Ephriam Kilpatrick.

In 1840, Malachi Jenkins began a larger hotel, the same year, Jacob Runk invented the sulky plow and began his plow factory. But he wasn’t apparently alone in the invention, and he lost a lot of money in patent fights. His plow was awarded first premium at the state fair in Decatur in 1863. He also made the first steel mouldboard prairie breaker plow, presumably for a customer, Mr. Forman.

In 1848, a large contingent of men from the county served in the Mexican War, taking part in some of the longest campaigns.

In 1851, with Amos Watts as financial backer, the first newspaper appeared, with a succession of editors. It had a meteoric career, first as the Monitor, the Democrat, the Washington County Herald, the Jacksonian, finally expiring in 1866 as the Constitution. One reason was that the victorious Republicans in 1862 began the Nashville Journal, with Sheriff James Garvin as owner. Later the first German paper appeared, the Nashville Zeitung, followed shortly by the Volkblatt, which survived until 1929. There was also for some years a German public school. John Huegely started his mill in 1853.

The second courthouse was built in 1810, the third in 1855. This being in the days of open range law, one of the duties of the sheriff was to impound stray livestock and advertise them for sale. The pound was between the courthouse and East Court street. This came to an end in 1870. In 1882 the courthouse burned to the ground and was replaced in 1883 by the present building. On a minor note, the first

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city dump was along the creek, east of the 700 block of South Kaskaskia.

A. D. Hay and sons opened the first bank in 1869. The first Masonic Lodge was organized in 1847. By 1871 Nashville had a large German population which supported a thriving Turner Society and had their own hall. In 1883 they celebrated the bicentennial of the arrival of the ship, S. S. Concord at Philadelphia, which in 1683 brought the first German emigrants to America.

J. Henry Decker opened his implement and wagon shop in 1867, followed by the establishment of the Hassinger Carriage Works in 1870. In 1877, Peter Peters opened the Nashville Foundry and Machine Shop, and several main street buildings still have iron posts marked “Nashville Foundry.” This enterprise stood at the northeast corner of W. Maple and Grand.

The Wagenhals Furniture Factory, steam powered, began in 1870, located south of Chester street, between Mill and Kaskaskia. Brick was made locally in at least five brickyards, the last and largest of which survived until in the 1920s, located south of the L & N tracks, east of the elevator. It was called the Nashville Pressed Brick Co., Oscar Brandhorst and H. E. Brink are the only persons still living who worked there.

Near the turn of the century, Nashville had two big flour mills, the Hugely and the Camp Spring, which made soft wheat flour and exported it on a large scale to the southern states and even Central America. This trade ended during the depression years of the 1930s. The old Hugely mill burned in 1935, and was succeeded by the Hugely elevator and the other by the Nashville Milling Co.

Also at the turn of the century a group of Nashvillians organized and operated an electric power plant just west of the Greenwood cemetery, also operated an ice plant. Ice making continued until the middle 1930s, but power ceased to flow some years before that, and it only served as a substation for the Southern Illinois Power Co. It is said the first automobile run in Nashville was owned by a Mr. Peeples, who was manager of the plant. The same promoters used the power house lake and a nearby mineral spring as a summer resort, and erected a large two story building, with an encircling porch, for a resort hotel. They secured contracts with several St. Louis fraternal organizations to provide vacations for their members, but the Carlsbad, as it was called, lost its popularity and the building was destroyed by fire one winter night in the early 1900s. The bottled mineral water somehow never made a large market.

Mr. Wm. Siecking, who was over 90 when he retired in 1935, for many years operated a feed mill and cider press on West Goodner street. Being of an experimental nature, he once ran a batch of carrots through the mill and pressed them, discovering that carrot juice was quite good, and that it also made an excellent jelly, so perhaps Nashville was the scene of the first vegetable juice extraction in the nation.

To backtrack a bit, in 1876 Nashville staged a monster Fourth of July celebration to celebrate the centennial year, with a great variety of attractions, including athletic events and a reception at the Buckeye Hotel for Abner Jackson, a Negro resident of the city, born in 1776, who was also celebrating his centennial, the only man in the county to do so at that time; however since then, there have been several of both sexes who have made it.

Out on East St. Louis street was one of the first brickyards, also the Nashville creamery, the Langstraus Brewery and later the steam laundry. An old dwelling located at the site of the present Brady store was the location of a laundry operated before World War I by the only Chinese residents of Nashville. Later the old house was torn down and the present building was erected to house a branch of the Chester Knitting Mills in the early 1920s. Their chief product, cotton hosiery, soon suffered a fatal blow when feminine tastes changed to silk.

Also gone today are the cigar makers, the harness makers; Grover Hassler’s father, who learned the trade as a boy in Germany, once made some wares for Queen Victoria of England when she visited some of her German cousins. Nashville also had a shoemaker at one time who had nearly a dozen people working for him.

During the presidential campaign between Blaine and Cleveland in the 1890s, politics became really hot here, one of the events being a huge all-day rally by the Republicans, with a torchlight parade. Hearing of the event, an enterprising young man named Harry Sternberg, noting that Nashville had no restaurant, rented an empty store building on Main street, set it up as a restaurant, hired no less than fifty women to bake pies for him, stocked up on coffee, and at a price of a nickel for a hunk of pie and coffee, made a handsome profit.

It is said a wolf den was located just northwest of the courthouse, in Nashville’s infancy. There were still a few wild turkeys here in 1896. In 1906, what was supposedly the last deer shot in the county was shipped from DuBois to Chicago.

Perhaps the greatest military forces ever to pass through the county was the day-long passage of the First Armored Division in the summer of 1939, on maneuver from Fort Knox, Kentucky to Fort Riley, Kansas, with the first scouts coming through early in the morning and the last rear guard late in the evening, quite a contrast to the passage of that intrepid band of men, the Kentucky Long Knives, under General George Rogers Clark, so many years before.
The Icarians: Five French Families in Washington County

In 1854, five French families banded together and came to Washington County, settling in Section 36, Lively Grove township, in the area that was later called West Grandcote. There is nothing too unusual about this immigration except they were Icarians. The county had a sprinkling of several nationalities at this time, but these people, members of a society founded in the U. S. by the French social reformer, Etienne Cabet, were definitely the first sect to settle within the county’s borders.

At Nauvoo, Illinois, far upstate, the Mormons had been driven out, the Prophets killed by an angry mob, the Mormon Temple destroyed. The Mormon exodus was already underway, and the town they built on the Mississippi river was dead and vacant. The Icarians simply seized the opportunity to move in before the weeds started growing in the streets.

But their system of government, under Cabet, didn’t work. The sect broke up. Some moved to St. Louis. One young couple, deeply distressed because their children all died in infancy, sought this county as their future home, far away from the river lowlands and the fever-infested swamps. Four more young couples joined this family, and they divided a tract of land so each received 80 acres, and built their homes here so they would be neighbors. They prospered, enjoyed their new democratic freedom. Three of these couples had ten children each. Musically inclined, they loved to dance, some of them still in possession of the violins they brought from France.

Today, there is still evidence of these family strains within the county. Mrs. Frances Karg and her family are direct descendants of these French immigrants. In the cemetery near Coulterville there are Icarian graves, and recently at St. Louis, the grave of Etienne Cabet, the early French leader, was honored by the St. Louis French Society. Mrs. Karg being an invited guest at the ceremonies.

The original Icarians settling near Lively Grove were Mr. and Mrs. Benoit Favre, Mr. and Mrs. Victor Pertuisot, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Bonas, Mr. and Mrs. Jean Bonnat, Mr. and Mrs. Baptiste Etienne and Mrs. Etienne’s father, Mr. George Gobel.

This copy of an old woodcut shows Nauvoo when it was at its peak, rated the largest city in Illinois. The Temple was the most imposing structure in the Midwest. The Icarians who came to Lively Grove first lived at Nauvoo.

The Historical Society of Washington County, Illinois

Winston Churchill once said: “Nothing is final; change is unceasing.” This must be fact, for each generation records, by written work or photo what happens today, realizing full well that never again will the subject be quite the same. This desire to record for posterity the happenings of today began thousands of years ago, and will continue so long as man exists.

In Washington County on November 2, 1965, a gathering of 28 interested citizens concluded it was time to establish an organization which would encourage the study of local history and attempt to obtain and preserve items of interest of this and past generations for the education and interest of generations to come.

Mr. Ernst Michael, chairman of the Washington County Board of Supervisors, appointed Mr. Venice Brink, David Watts and Lawrence E. House of Nashville; Grover Brinkman of Okawville; Miss Claudine Coulter of Oakdale; Mrs. Edgar Ibendahl of Pilot Knob township, and Mrs. Willis Coulter of Lively Grove to serve as the first Historical Society Committee with a request that the organization be properly incorporated in this State. This was accomplished on March 13, 1966, and “The Historical Society of Washington County, Illinois” became active.

The Board of Supervisors on July 12, 1966 appointed Mr. Lawrence E. House, Society President, and Mrs. Edgar Ibendahl, Society Secretary to act as a Steering Committee to establish the Washington County Sesquicentennial Commission, which is the organization responsible for the publication of this book.

This Commission was chosen at a public meeting on January 10, 1967, with Mr. Arthur L. Koetting, Jr. of Okawville as chairman; Norman Karg of Lively Grove as vice-chairman; Mrs. Don Thompson, secretary; and Wilbert H. Sachtleben, treasurer.
History of the First Baptist Church, Nashville

On August 23, 1873, a group of Baptists led by Rev. W. H. Carner met in the M. E. Church at Nashville to organize a Baptist Church. Rev. W. H. Hatchings was elected moderator and J. M. Mason, clerk. The charter members were: K. C. Mason, Ellen Mason, James Irvin, Lucy Irvin, Nancy Wright, Lucy Walker, Laura J. Mason, J. M. Mason, Elizabeth Gozney and Jane B. Routree.


The first church building was erected in 1874 at a cost of $2,914.63. In September of the same year the church was admitted into the Nine Mile Baptist Association. The first reference to a Sunday School is election of officers on June 23, 1833. J. M. Thomson was elected superintendent. Others who served in this capacity to date are: J. C. Eade, J. M. Mason, Jos. Morris, Wm. Reidelberger, John Sternberg, W. H. Hughes, Eva J. Luke, W. L. Hendricks, Alonzo Small, W. C. Gholson, Royal Bryan, Floyd Gholson, James Gillispie, Howard M. Fox, E. A. Small, Calvin Eade, Chester Moss, Edward C. Kemper, Jr., Chester Moss.

In the summer of 1925, a basement and other improvements were made at a cost of $3,200. The church had long felt the need of more room, and in 1948 an educational annex, consisting of 13 classrooms, pastor's study and church office was made possible by a legacy from Mr. W. L. Troutt, the entire building program costing about $26,000. The church today has 224 resident members.

VINTAGE OF 1904 (OKAWVILLE)

This old photo, taken about 1904, has nostalgia that will be shared by many senior citizens. The man behind the bar is the late Henry Klauke, one of the pioneers of Okawville.

Mr. Klauke was born at Blutzen, Hanover, Germany, came to America as a young man. For a time he worked on farms in the vicinity of Okawville, and at one time also made his livelihood as a commercial fisherman at Reel Foot Lake, Tennessee.

He remembered the time a siege of cholera broke out in the area, took a heavy toll of life. In one day, Okawville had eight funerals.

When a young man, he purchased a store at Okawville from Henry Temme, who was the father of the late Julius Temme, long an assessor of Washington County. For years the huge brick two-story building near the depot was a landmark in Okawville. The front section housed the tavern, the remainder of the floor given over to a general store. The family resided on the top floor. The building was built by Mascoutah brick masons, who also laid the bricks at the Okawville grade school that originally stood on the block now occupied by the city municipal building.

Mr. Klauke started in business in Okawville about the same time the L&N railroad was built through the county. At that time it was called the Southeastern. Between the Klauke store at the depot and "downtown" Okawville, a mile to the north was virgin forest connected only with a dirt road.

If you'll examine this photo with a magnifying glass, you'll see that one side of the beer cooler has various bits of writing on it, in chalk. This was the amount of money certain customers owed Mr. Klauke, rather a novel method of bookkeeping.

The Klauke store, built in 1873, was a landmark at Okawville until it was razed in 1965.
Too Short to Classify......

Hugh P. Green, grandfather of Atty. P. E. Green of Nashville, was at least one county man who went to California in the gold rush of 1849, accompanied by a Mr. Lane. Upon his return via boat, he turned in his gold dust at a U. S. Mint and purchased 160 acres of land in the county, which is still in the family name.

Anson A. Hinkle, of DuBois township, one of the first growers and packers of fine fruit in the county, was also a Conchologist of note. In spite of his agricultural interests, Mr. Hinkle never forgot his work in this scientific field, and was known as one of the leading Conchologists of the world, making many extended trips to Mexico and Central America. Ironically, his death occurred of a heart attack while he tried to extract his car from a mud hole on a rural road west of DuBois. He was also one of the organizers of the DuBois State Bank.

The First Presbyterian Church of Nashville was organized by pioneer Presbyterians of Scotch descent, in 1832. It was called Elkhorn Presbyterian, located at Sawyer’s Point, four miles west of Nashville. After Nashville had been established as the county seat, the meeting place was removed to the nearby town and the name changed. Here a frame building was erected on the site of the present city hall in 1851, at a cost of $1,100. The present building was dedicated June 19, 1885.

An item concerning the Nashville Creamery, dated May 20, 1837, shows the firm received 5,000 pounds of milk that day. Farmers received 80¢ per hundred pounds. The butter churned from the milk was on the market at 22¢ per pound.

A Dr. Lucas in 1833 had a small drug store in Ashley before the community was legally laid out as a town. Truman Gilbert opened a store in 1854, P. M. and E. McNeil built the first sawmill there; later a small grist mill was attached, and a woolen card mill. In 1866, Coffey, Brown and Harrison erected a large mill, and in 1873 J. L. Post started a second flouring mill, as well as a fruit-drying facility. First bank was opened by Pace Bros. in 1877. First newspaper was the Ashley Gazette, started in 1857; Robert Fleming next started a paper called “The Experiment,” and David Benton edited the Ashley Herald. A. W. O’Bryant took over the Ashley Gazette in 1876. First regular school was taught in a log building that had been the James Woodruff residence, in 1829; first teacher was Jarvis Jackson.

The original members of the Pilot Knob Methodist Church, which closed in 1961, were German immigrants. A tornado destroyed the first church building before it was completed, a second church was erected in 1890. Truman Brandt was the last minister to serve the church. In August, 1965, a cemetery association was formed, to maintain the cemetery on the grounds where the church once stood. The original church bell has been enclosed in a shelter here. A marble slab bears this inscription: Bell mounted by trustees of Pilot Knob Cemetery Association in memorial of early Methodist founders.

Mr. Jack D. Huggins, Belleville, Illinois public accountant, claims as his great-great-great grandfather, Robert Huggins, and his great-great-great grandmother, Kate Lively. The Lively-Huggins family were the principals in the Lively Indian Massacre near Covington.

Paul L. Poiriot, of Irvington-on-the-Hudson, New York, where he edits the national magazine, The Freeman, a former Beaucouy boy, writes the editors as follows: “Remember that the true history of Washington County is in the records of those who lived their lives there,” then cites the fact that his parental grandparents fled oppression in Europe to settle and raise their family in Washington County, where his 84-year-old father, E. W. Poiriot last year was visited by the teacher who taught him in the first grade at Pleasant Grove, between Hoyleton and Beaucouy.

A draw running through the southwestern part of Nashville was once called the Tennessee River because many of the city’s first settlers came from that state.

Long years ago, Peter Bieser was known as “the blind city clerk” at Nashville.

Although only incorporated since 1929, Radom has been in existence since 1856, when the hamlet was laid out by two New Yorkers, on land purchased from the I. C. railroad. One of these men was no other than General G. B. Turchin. The other was Nicholas Nichalski. The town grew to a peak population above 300, but gradually declined. Joseph Gloskowski was the first railway agent and postmaster. St. Michael’s Catholic Church there is an outstanding edifice.

Wamac, at the border of three counties, and getting its name from the first two letters of Washington, the first two of Marion and the “c” from Clinton, had the honor of having the first woman voter in Illinois. She was Mrs. O. W. Coleman, who voted on July 5, 1913 at the first election after Woman Suffrage was made legal in the state. This also was the first election held in the newly formed town of Wamac.

In 1891, Coxey’s Army camped on Crooked Creek, on its way to the capitol at Washington, in one of the first “protest marches” to make the headlines. Jacob Sechler Coxey, popularly known as “General Coxey,” later ran for U. S. President, was defeated. Coxey’s grandiose plan was to put all unemployed at building roads.

When the Nashville Fire Department sold its old pump, back in the thirties, it was purchased by Oscar Decker, a farmer, who used it to irrigate his fruit orchards.

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The late Julius Temme, long an assessor of Okawville township was conceded to be the tallest man in the county. He stood six feet, seven inches in his stocking feet.

St. Luke Church at Covington was built in 1855; St. John’s Church at Plum Hill was built in 1854, upon four acres of land given by J. F. Mangenalker; St. Paul’s E. & R. Church, southwest of Okawville, was built in 1850.

Nashville was honored by a visit from Charles A. Lindbergh, who stopped there to visit relatives soon after his record trans-oceanic flight in 1927.

In 1860, Ashley had 4 dry goods stores, 2 grocery stores, 3 hardware stores, a furniture store, 3 blacksmith shops, 1 mill, a jeweler, meat market, 3 restaurants, 2 shoe shops, 3 livery stables and 3 grain dealers. There were also two Methodist churches, a Baptist, Christian and Universalist church.

Haley’s Comet, still remembered by many of the county’s senior citizens, was visible here in 1910. At the time, many predicted the end of the world.

Without doubt, Judge W. P. Green held the county record for elective judicial office, being elected in 1910 and retiring in 1950.

Limestone, secured from the state penitentiary at Chester, was first spread on the Hinkley farm, Ashley, in 1907, inaugurating the movement of soil improvement that has continued ever since.

St. Ann’s Catholic Church at Nashville started as a mission from Okawville. Its first building was destroyed by fire. Today, its fine church and school is considered one of the outstanding achievements of a dedicated parish.

OKAWVILLE’S BAPTIST CHAPEL

The Okawville Baptist Chapel had its birth in the home of Thomas W. Laker on February 21, 1965, with eleven in attendance, under the leadership of Rev. John Wittmer, superintendent of missions of the Nine Mile Association. There were seventeen present in the meeting on the following Sunday. On March 7, 1965 services were moved to the Riechman building near the depot. On September 1, 1965 this building was purchased. The Sunday School was officially organized into classes and departments. Other Baptist churches contributed to the development of this new charge. When the mission came under the leadership of the Beaucoup Baptist Church of Pinckneyville, the charter membership was established in this union with the mother church. There were 20 charter members. The mission continued with supply preachers and an interim pastor, Ernest Queen of DuQuoin.

In September, 1965, Rev. Bill Williams was called as pastor, assuming his duties on October 31. With his wife, Beverly and daughter, Julie, he moved into the newly remodeled parsonage, above the chapel, in November.

During the past 14 months, Sunday school enrollment has grown from 40 to 65, and sixteen new members have joined the church, nine by letter from other churches and seven by baptism. The chapel held its initial Vacation Bible School in 1966, with 10 enrolled, anticipates an even larger enrollment this year. A strip of ground immediately adjoining the chapel in the rear has been purchased. A revival was held in April, another is anticipated. The mission is looking forward to the day when the body will be strong enough to constitute a church.
METHODISM—AND WASHINGTON COUNTY

We do not know who was the first Methodist to set foot in Washington County. It might have been Captain Joseph Ogle, one of George Rogers Clark's soldiers, who so well liked the land he had helped conquer from the British that, along with a group of veterans of that campaign, he returned and settled in Monroe and St. Clair counties, between 1782 and 1785. Ogle was a Methodist and one of the first zealous religious leaders in Illinois.

It could also have been Rev. Illoso Riggs, an early Methodist preacher in Illinois. It is known that Riggs journeyed to Mount Gerizim, Kentucky, where the western conference of the Methodist Church was holding its annual session, and appealed for official help to meet the opportunities and challenges in the new land.

The conference, which at that time covered all Methodist endeavor west of the Alleghenies, responded by appointing Benjamin Young a missionary to Illinois. The date was 1803, and Young could well have been the first Methodist. Also, it could have been the veteran sin-splitter, the Rev. Jesse Walker, who was appointed the first presiding elder of what was called the Illinois District of the Methodist Conference, in 1806.

The first county records we have tell of Methodist class organization in Beacoup township in 1819, led by three local preachers who had settled there. Mr. James Walker, Mr. Daniel Whittenberg, and Mr. Rhodum Allen. Soon there was an increasing number of Methodists here, and for years the Beacoup community was a strong Methodist center. A camp meeting was annually held there on the spot where the present Beacoup Methodist Church stands, continuing for years.

By this time, Methodism in Illinois had five circuits served by ordained ministers. Since 1815 the church here had been part of the Missouri Conference, Washington County being included in the Okaw circuit. Sometime later, Orenith Fischer, local preacher, settled in Nashville township, built the first dwelling there in 1830. In 1824, all of Illinois, had its own Methodist conference.

The Nashville Methodist Church dates from 1832. Many of these first Methodists were people of Irish descent who came from Tennessee, and among their leaders were such men as Dempsey Kennedy, a well-to-do planter who came north to get out of a slave state because slavery had no place in his religion. After his arrival here, he freed his slaves.

Washington County was part of the Mt. Vernon Methodist Circuit until 1837 when it separated to become the Nashville Circuit. Liberty Church in section 21, Beacoup, was started in 1831, Richview Church in 1842 and Ashley in 1840.

In the autumn of 1844, Nashville was the scene of an event which has had considerable weight on the Methodist Church nationally. Possibly this was the most important historical event that ever occurred in this county.

In the Spring, the general conference of the church had met, with the slavery issue the focal point of contention. Soon an impasse developed to the point where it was clear a division of the church was inevitable. The southern section which threatened to secede wanted to take with them half of all the nationally-owned property of the church, its publishing house and colleges. No definite conclusion was reached, and it was left to the action of the various other conferences as to which plan should be approved. The Illinois delegation had been divided.

When the conference met in Nashville, there was one noted person present, all prepared to sway the conference to the view that southerners would be secessionists if they broke the unity of the church.

This was the Reverend Peter Cartright, the veteran circuit rider, who had fled Kentucky years ago because it was a slave state. Cartright was noted for never mincing words, for being a gifted speaker, an untiring servant of the church, albeit in hot water at times for his propensity to mix religion and politics, having served as legislator for some years.

The conference voted to sustain Cartright and demand that the church nationally defend itself against all secessionists. As this was a first annual conference of the church, its action had a great effect on all the other succeeding ones, and a large majority followed suit. Thus, a first division was formed on a national scale over the slavery question in a large religious denomination. The form it took was influenced by the action of the Illinois conference in Nashville.

In 1852 the Southern Illinois Conference was created by dividing the Illinois Conference, and even before this, the German immigrants in the area started work for a separate district. The Rev. William Heminghaus was the first among these men in this county. His group was organized in Nashville in 1853, with the Rev. Peter Hehners as pastor, including members from Nashville, Little Prairie, North Prairie and other nearby communities in the circuit. The Nashville First Church became a station, apart from the circuit in 1857. Before the Civil War, churches had been organized in Irvington and Okawville.

When the war broke out, the Southern Illinois Conference was strongly pro-Union despite the fact that many of its members were of southern descent. Many of these families, be it remembered, had come to Illinois to flee slavery, and some strongly opposed it.

The Southern Illinois Conference furnished more chaplains to the Union Army than did many larger groups. When the war ended, however, a feeling persisted by many that the church had gotten into politics too much with its strongly pro-Union stand, these families banded into groups seeking separate organizations. They were about to effect a merger when it was learned that the M. E. Church South would welcome them. This was an answer, and it was agreed they

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would become a part of the Illinois conference of the M. E. Church South. A first session of this group was held on October 16, 1867 at the Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Bishop D. S. Doggett presiding.

County-wise, a group had been in existence since 1864, and in 1867 they erected a building, later took the name of Forman Memorial Church.

After the Civil War, Methodist churches were organized in DuBois. Bethel (section 32, Beaucoup Township); Pleasant Grove (section 2, Beaucoup township); Locust Creek (section 35, Nashville township); and Maple Grove in (section 29, Irvington township). There also was a rather short-lived congregation in Hoyleton which was largely succeeded by Bethel Methodist Church of the German conference, due to the German infiltration in that community. German churches were also organized at North Prairie, (section 20, Hoyleton township), and at Pilot Knob.

All of these various groups reflected an expanding population and the desire to have a church nearby, due to transportation via horse and buggy.

The German congregations of Southern Illinois became a part of the Southeast German Conference in 1861, and a few years later joined the German Conference of St. Louis.

Assimilation into American life and World War I brought about an end of need for such, and in 1926 it was merged in the geographical conferences. The four German Methodist churches in the counties joined the Southern Illinois conference. Changing times and especially the advent of the automobile brought about the end of some of the smaller churches. In 1939 there was a union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church into the Methodist Church. Once again there was only one Methodist body in Washington County.

In 1953, the three separate congregations in Nashville merged into one, named Grace Methodist Church.

Today there are Methodist congregations in Nashville, Okawville, Hoyleton, Irvington, Richview, Ashley, Beaucoup and DuBois.

**Okawville's Post Office Through the Years**

Unique as it sounds, Okawville's first postmaster was a woman, Mary A. White, who assumed office August 1, 1881. The post office at that early date was located in that segment of the community called "South Okawville," evidently not within the town itself. Mrs. White served until May 31, 1889, when she was succeeded by Ily. Strauss, whose term for some reason was of short duration, April 1, 1889 to June 15, 1899.

Herman Schulze assumed office June 1, 1889, served until June 30, 1893, when Mrs. White came back into the service, starting July 1, 1893, terminating August 31, 1897.

Thomas Cantrell was Okawville's next postmaster, assuming duties September 1, 1897, to December 31, 1907. The post office at that time was in a room north of the Moehle-Tscharner store, the former bank building, Hanover and St. Louis streets.

Geo. F. Tscharner succeeded Cantrell, assuming duties January 1, 1908. Until June 1909, Okawville was a fourth class office, but in July of that year it was advanced to third class, maintaining that status for 15 years.

Tscharner served until June 16, 1913, when he was succeeded by Wm. F. Hagebusch, who took office June 17, 1913, continued in that capacity until August 17, 1921. The office was now in the W. G. Frank building, Front & Walnut streets, having moved there in 1915.

J. W. Miller succeeded Hagebusch, serving until June 24, 1930, when he was succeeded by Chester A. Bailey (June 24, 1930 to July 31, 1931), when Frank H. Morgan took over the duties, serving until July 31, 1939.

Arthur L. Koetting, Jr., the present incumbent, started his duties August 1, 1949. The move to the new post office building on Nashville & High streets took place May 14, 1960. The office is now advanced to second class. Mrs. Kathleen Grattendick and Mrs. Bertha Schwankhaus are assistants. Stanley W. Garbs is the rural carrier.

Jacob H. Stricker and Wm. F. Lohmeier, both deceased, served long tenures as rural carriers out of the local office, with Fred Schorfheide as assistant. August Greve currently is the assistant carrier.
THE WASHINGTON COUNTY HOSPITAL

Washington County is one of the few counties in the state that can boast it has a $750,000 modern hospital, debt free. (Actual cost of hospital, including new equipment that has been added is $751,224.92).

No tax was collected to pay the hospital cost. The only tax is a small operational tax charged to people in the hospital district. All memorials, donations, and funds that are received go toward future expansion and added equipment, to better serve the medical needs of the entire county.

Here is rather an amazing statistical tabulation:

Hospital site (15 acres) was donated by Amos H. Watts and Wadsworth W. Watts; Ruetter estate, $194,203.88; pledges and donations from organizations and individuals of Nashville and Washington County, $287,613.97; Hill Burton Federal Grant, $133,000; City Government of Nashville, $97,500; Memorials, $17,943.73.

The hospital has 37 beds with four extra in time of overflow. Several times during the past year all beds have been full.

There were 112 births at the hospital in 1963; 104 in 1961; 100 in 1965; 82 in 1966, and 48 (so far) in 1967, making a total of 446.

Total patients average daily census: 16.5 in 1963; 21.8 in 1961; 19.4 in 1965; 21.1 in 1966; 24.9 in 1967. Total admissions, 3,686. Total dollars medical service rendered, 1966, $251,722.27. The hospital has 65 full time and five part time employes. Five county doctors are on the staff, as well as 32 consulting physicians, and three dentists.

The Bridget Hughes Hospital

Nashville's first hospital, started as a $5,000 corporation in 1907, was through an initial gratuity of Bridget Hughes, whose will left most of her estate for that purpose. The hospital (now the Farm Bureau building) was opened in the fall of 1910, with 25 beds. As an early hospital, it did an admirable job, but was forced to close during the summer of 1922, Bridget Hughes, whose life was the hard work of a domestic, also left small sums to several county churches and the orphanage at Hoyleton.

Revolutionary War Burials in the County

According to Harriet J. Walker's much-used record of Revolutionary Soldiers Buried in Illinois, published in 1918, upon the anniversary of Illinois' first one hundred years, there were four recorded burials in Washington county, as follows:

GEORGE BROWN was from Virginia, born in Chesterfield county in 1752. He enlisted in Charlotte county March, 1780, serving two months with Capt. Thomas Williams; again in 1781 for two months under Capt. Dudley Barrel and Col. Peter Muhlenberg; again he served for two months under Capt. Pickeway and Col. Holt Richardson. He removed to Washington county, Illinois, where he died March 24, 1842. He was pensioned.

JAMES CRABTREE was from Virginia, where he served in the war as ensign in the Washington county line of troops. He came to Washington county, Illinois, and died there. He was pensioned.

CONRAD GOODNER was from North Carolina, and served from that state. He came to Illinois, settling in St. Clair county, but removed to Washington county, where he died. He was pensioned.

THOMAS McCLERKEN was from Chester county, Camden district, South Carolina. He removed to Kentucky, and from there to Indiana, and thence to Washington county, Illinois, where he died, and is buried near Sparta. A stone tells of his being a Revolutionary soldier. Each year the Grand Army post places flowers on his grave. At the age of 95 years he applied for a pension, but doubtless died before it was granted. "County and Family Histories."

There have been unconfirmed stories of other Revolutionary War burials in Washington County, in unmarked or forgotten graves. Perhaps some of this is true, but as far as the editors of this book can attain, there are no records of the same.
History of St. John's Church, Johannisburg

Early in the 1800s, Napoleon had most of Europe anxious and afraid. Because of war, poverty and fear of the future, many German people came to America in an effort to find freedom and a better life. Some of these Germans who came from Hanover and Westphalia in the northern part of the province, settled in the Johannisburg community. Their faith was that of the Evangelical Church of Prussia, which was a union of the Reformed and Lutheran faiths.

These people organized the Independent Evangelical Lutheran St. Johannes Congregation here in 1837. (The first written history, by Rev. Adolf Dietrich, begins in 1833, however judging by the first list of children who were baptized, it is concluded that the congregation existed as early as 1837.) The first church building was of logs, erected on the northwest corner of the present park block. It also served as a schoolhouse, where the children were taught the German language and the Christian religion from the Lutheran catechism and the Bible.

In 1842 the church in Venedy separated from the Johannisburg congregation. A disagreement about the hymn books is given as the reason for the separation. This group, in turn, joined the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church.

St. John's congregation continued to grow. A new church building was completed and dedicated on Palm Sunday, April 13, 1851. This building did not have a steeple, and the bell was hung in a wooden frame alongside the church.

In 1857 some of the members of St. John's who lived in Elk horn Prairie separated from the mother church and organized the St. Peter's Church and school there. This was a friendly separation, because of distances involved. This new community was first called St. Petersburg but later changed its name to Stone Church.

In 1865 the old log schoolhouse was found inadequate and a new brick building was built. The present park was laid out in 1873.

In 1883 the steeple, with two rooms, was added to the church building, increasing it to its present length. In 1891 the building was renovated and arched windows set in. In the same year the first pastor of the Evangelical Synod of North America was called. Up to this time the pastors were “free” ministers. This new Evangelical pastor was Rev. C. J. Knicker, who introduced the Evangelical Hymnal and Catechism.

In 1893 the present parsonage was built, succeeding a small building of two rooms. Later a kitchen and two rooms were added. In 1912 the brick schoolhouse was partially destroyed in a heavy rainstorm. It was decided to build a new frame building, larger than the old structure.

In 1913 the Ladies Aid Society was organized while Rev. Th. Uhdeau was pastor. This group financed the renovation of the church interior in 1925. On October 3, 1937, St. John's joined the South Illinois Synod of Evangelical and Reformed Churches. In 1948 the church interior was again redecorated, a utility room added and a furnace installed.

In 1959 St. John's formed a "charge" with St. Peter's at Stone Church, in which they agreed to share one pastor. New E. & R. hymnals were purchased in 1961.


(Editor’s Note: Photogenically, the Johannisburg church easily is a “prize” in the county, its simple yet dominant architecture reminiscent of an age that is fast disappearing from the American scene.)
Coal has been part of Washington County’s industry for decades. The Number Six vein is too deep within county borders for the inroads of the big stripping shovels, but deep-shaft mines have tapped this vein at various spots, to consistent, long-lasting commercial profit. Some of the county coal mines have been short-lived, others just the opposite. The Bois Coal Company mine, closed in September 1961, long a Landmark at DuBois, was the oldest mine in Illinois.

Nashville, currently without a coal mine, has had two deep-shaft mines in its past. The old Huegely Mine, south of present Illinois Highway 460, near the Missouri-Illinois tracks, is little more than a memory.

Nashville’s second mine, operated by the Nicholson Coal Company, later selling out to Clarkson, closed about 1939, after an old oil well flooded the tunnels, making operation unprofitable. This mine, alongside the L&N tracks east of the depot, once served as a coaling station for the railroad before the days of the diesels. Nothing remains of the mine today.

Ashley had a deep-shaft mine, south of route 460, but it has been closed for a long time.

Okawville’s first coal mine was sunk near the spot where the state highway building now stands. It went down to the No. 6 vein, but the coal here had a bad fault. about two feet of slag mixed in the vein, so really only about four feet of coal could be mined. The mine closed shortly after World War I as an unprofitable operation. It’s hoisting engine and cages were purchased by the new mine at Venedy.

Okawville’s second mine, sunk southeast of the L&N depot, on what is now the Riechmann land, had a short life as well, closing in 1941, about two years after it started operation. The shaft here went down to the No. 6 vein, but a fault in the coal seam made mining unprofitable. All that remains of this mine today is a pile of rubble that was once part of the boiler room.

Continued
Washington County’s only operating coal mine today is the deep-shaft mine of the Venedy Coal Company, currently employing 22 men. The mine was started by the Adolph Brockschmidt family, Ed. Petri, William Bergmann and Herman Maschoff, back in 1921, mining its first coal in 1922. The shaft here is 260 feet deep, to the No. 6 vein, which at this point often reaches a depth of eight feet. The Scanlan Brothers took over the operation of the mine in July, 1946. Recently the mine set a production record of 210 tons of coal in a single day.

The twin shafts of the Darmstadt Coal Company, started about 1910, were so near the county line in Washington County that the mine produced coal from both this county and St. Clair County.

The No. 5 Mine of the Centralia Coal Co., located just inside Washington County borders at Wamac, is the only mine within the county ever suffering a major tragedy. On March 26, 1947, a dust explosion at 3:30 trapped nearly 130 men in the tunnels. When the dead were brought up from the smoking deathtrap, one by one, the total finally reached 111, rated as one of the worst mine disasters in Illinois. Operating full blast in the war years, with little thought for the safety of the men, accumulation of coal dust in the tunnels finally triggered the blast.

A county miner, Ted Keil of DuBois, labelled “No. 112” lay between life and death for months, finally recovered, and went back to work in the same shaft. Later No. 5 was closed, its shaft filled and all topside rigging removed. In Foundation Park, Centralia, a bronze plaque today lists the names of the 111 men who died in this holocaust. The story of

Continued
“Old No. 5,” and the needless death of 111 miners, has been the subject of many articles in national periodicals, down through the years.

If there is any romance connected with the grim task of mining coal, it goes to the little mine at Du-Bois, closed in 1961, called the oldest mine in the state. The shaft went down during the days of Lincoln, so narrow that the mine mules had to be set on their haunches to make the trip. Located alongside the Illinois Central tracks, the mine saw the birth of the famous Hayes ten-wheelers, and no less a personality than the legendary Casey Jones rode the high iron past it. The mine was never modernized. Miners operated with open-flame lamps on their caps, used pick and shovel methods to mine coal. A serious cave-in at shafthead finally closed the mine. Today the shaft has been filled, all the top rigging removed.

There have been several other attempts at coal mining within county borders, none of which reached the commercial stage.

In addition to the mines mentioned here, there also is a “natural” coal mine in the county, almost forgotten today. At a spot on the Kaskaskia river, known as Coal Stone ford, Covington township, a natural outcropping of coal was mined by the pioneers when the river was at low stage. The vein still is visible, but can be viewed only during mid-summer when the river stage is extremely low.
T. W. Smith opened a law office and announced he would take clients in Madison, Washington, Bond, and St. Clair Counties. May 29, 1819.

Dr. John H. Lambert of Carlyle in Washington County was agent to collect neighborhood news for the Edwardsville “Spectator” and to receive payment for subscriptions to that paper in his county. June 5, 1819.

Chester Ashley opened a law office in Washington County. June 5, 1819.

The town of Carlyle advertised that it was very much in need of a shoemaker and cobbler. June 18, 1819.

Harry Willton and Elizabeth Allen, both of Washington County, were married by Lewis Laughlin, Esquire, on August 22, 1819.

John Lee and Beulah Burton were married by Mr. Laughlin on September 1, 1819.

The property of Jacob Meyer, deceased, was sold at public auction. September 25, 1819.

Nathaniel S. Benton, Attorney, announced that he would take clients in Washington County. February, 1820.

John Kain, a County Commissioner, approved a bill in bankruptcy filed by John Martin. His assignee was Harry Willton. March 1, 1820.

Mr. Kain also approved a bill in bankruptcy filed by Joseph Foss. His assignee was George Pogue. March 3, 1820.

The Honorable William H. Bradshy, Clerk of the County Commissioners Court of Washington County, announced the sale at auction, on the 3rd Monday of April, 1820, of the goods, chattels and credits of Walter Hull, deceased.

The state census of 1820 showed that Washington County had a population of 1,514 whites and 33 colored people.

A group of Washington County citizens, headed by Thomas F. Herbert, Chairman, and Thomas Lawrence, Secretary, met in the Carlyle Hotel and adopted a resolution to wear crape on the left arm for thirty days to mourn the death of the national hero, Commodore Stephen Decatur. April 18, 1820.

On June 13, 1820, it was announced that one of the recently established post roads in Illinois would run from Kaskaskia, by the Irish Settlement, Covington, Carlyle, and Perryville, to Vandalia.

A summons was served on Stephen Easton to appear in the Washington County Circuit Court in Covington to show cause why his wife, Polly, should not be granted a divorce. July 7, 1820.

Benjamin Mills was a practicing attorney in Washington County. When in Greenville on business and while attending court he was the house guest of Doctor Perrine. August 9, 1820.

On Thursday, August 17, 1820, Daniel McKinney of Jefferson County was married to Fanny Williams of Washington County by William Vandergrift, Esquire. The wedding took place at the Eagle Salt Works near Carlyle.

Washington County was represented in the State Senate by Zach Maddox and in the House of Representat...
At Carlyle on May 7, 1822, John W. Skipmore was married to Sarah Ann Foss, daughter of John Foss, formerly of Baltimore, Maryland.

William H. Bradsby, Esquire, allowed himself to be named a candidate for election to the office of Major General to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of General Moore. June 22, 1822.

On February 4, 1823, the Senate confirmed the nomination of James Temple as a Justice of the Peace for Washington County.

It was learned, on April 19, 1823, that Colonel Bankston, Senator for Washington County, had successfully blocked a move to create a new county of which Carlyle would have been the center. The Senator’s action was based on the fear that the move had been the result of an unholy bargain with certain members of the conventionist (slavery) party.

It was discovered that the water from a certain well, situated on a high ridge in the prairie near to the road, leading from Carlyle to Shawneetown, had the same properties as *sal cartharticus amarus* (Epsom salts) and should be an excellent source of revenue for the community. November 3, 1823.

On October 12, 1824, Colonel William H. Bradsby of Covington was a candidate for Elector of President and Vice President. His instructions were to vote for Henry Clay for President and Mr. Sanford of New York for Vice President.

On October 19, 1824, Henry Sharp, Esquire, of Washington County, was a candidate for Elector, with instructions to vote for Henry Clay for President and for “some tried Republican as Vice President.”

Representing Washington County in the Fourth General Assembly (November 23, 1824) were Colonel Bankston, Senator, and Philo Beers, Representative. Mr. Beers was appointed to a committee to investigate other members to determine if each had satisfied the statutory requirement of residency in their respective counties.

On Saturday, December 11, 1824, Mr. Beers presented a remonstrance of sundry citizens of Washington County against a division thereof.

On December 21, 1824, the public learned of the final outcome of the General Election for and against a proposed convention which had for its purpose an Amendment to the Illinois State Constitution to make it a slave state. The results showed that the citizens of Washington County had voted 112 For and 173 Against the convention.

On Wednesday, December 22, 1824, a bill was passed to form a new county, to be named Clinton, out of parts of Washington, Bond and Fayette. Among those voting in favor of forming the new county was Colonel Bankston, Senator for Washington County.

In the Fifth General Assembly Washington County was represented in the Senate by Joseph A. Beaird and in the House by Charles Slade. September 29, 1826.

The local representatives for collecting news and receiving payment for subscriptions to the Columbus (Sparta) “Herald” were David F. White, Postmaster at Beaucoup: John White, Sheriff at Nashville; and William Boyd, Postmaster at Nashville. September 13, 1839.

James McClurken, living in Elk Horn Prairie, 14 miles west of Nashville on the headwaters of Mud Creek, offered a $5 reward for the return of a black mare which had strayed. Mr. McClurken was the owner of the steam mill. January 3, 1840.

Several complaints were registered with the Postmaster at Beaucoup because the Columbus (Sparta) “Herald” had not arrived on time. Friday, January 10, 1840.

The local representatives for the Sparta “Democrat” were Z. H. Vernor, Postmaster of Nashville, and D. S. White, Postmaster of Beaucoup. Friday, May 8, 1840.

On March 6, 1841, Henry Huggins of Bolo was married to Elizabeth S. Curtis in Nashville, by Justice of the Peace James Burns. The groom was born in Illinois, the bride in Tennessee.

On April 4, 1852, William Huggins was married to Margaret Bird by Samuel Pyatt, Justice of the Peace in Perry County, Illinois. (Ed. Note. Robert Huggins, who migrated to Perry County around 1800 from Pee Dee, South Carolina, and who married Kate Lively, was the father of James Huggins. This James was the father of William, who married Margaret Bird. William had a son, David, who had a son, David, who was the father of Jack D. Huggins, CPA of Belleville, Illinois, who currently audits public accounts in Washington County.)
WASHINGTON COUNTY AND THE CIVIL WAR

By the Ordinance of 1787, the Northwest Territory was declared free. But the existing slavery in the old French settlements was not touched, and in the days of the Illinois Territory, slavery was brought in from the south under the subterfuge of calling slaves "indentured servants."

When Illinois sought admission to the Union, the only debate in Congress was over the question whether Illinois was actually a slave state. The pro-slavery element was strong, and the first legislature passed a set of laws that were as oppressive on colored people as those of any southern state. Efforts were made to protect and increase existing slavery.

According to the old records, there were a few slaves in Washington County, but most of the people who first settled here had done so to get away from slave territory. The slave element, realizing that most of the incoming immigration was anti-slavery, made a last effort to make the state slave. This element, controlling the legislature by political knavery, pushed through a bill to have a special election relative to a state constitutional convention which they expected to control.

The election was held in July of 1821 and was a very hot one. But when the votes were counted, it was defeated by almost four to one, in a total vote several times as big as in the presidential election a few months later.

Washington County voted against the convention 173 to 112. Nevertheless, Illinois had many commercial ties with the South, and anti-slavery views were unpopular in the large towns. But the tide of emigration was rolling in, and most of the newcomers were anti-slavery, especially the Germans who poured into the county, starting about 1837.

The old pro-slavery element gave them a cold reception. A political movement called the American Party began in the South and spread into the North as a secret society called the "Know-Nothings," whose aim it was to stop emigration, fostering slavery. It polled a fair-sized third party vote in Washington County in two national elections. On the other hand, the German settlers were befriended by some of the older anti-slavery families from Tennessee.

The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in the 1850s brought the situation to a climax. The abolitionists in the county organized stations on the "underground railroad" to help slaves escape. One branch entered the county and brought slaves to a station near Oakdale. From here they were moved to a station just east of Nashville, operated by the Henry family.

The next move was Richview, where they were put aboard Illinois Central trains bound north.

On the other hand, the pro-slavery element and those who profited by it, sometimes threatened people who were outspoken abolitionists. They also tried to capture escaping slaves and return them to their owners for rewards.

But as far as can be determined, the county underground railroad lost only one man in the area. He was shot, northeast of Nashville, and grisly as it sounds today, his head was severed and sent back south for the one thousand dollar reward.

The outbreak of the Civil War revealed that the people of Washington County were overwhelmingly for the Union. There were over 1,200 enlistments, a Continued
rather amazing figure for a small county. The list shows a very large number of Scotch-Irish and German names.

Over two hundred soldiers from the county lost their lives in the war, either on battlefields, or from illness or accident. Battlefield promotions were common in the Civil War. Thomas Seawell of Nashville, for instance, was promoted to brevet Brigadier General before he was 24 years old. The pro-southern element in all the bordering states north of the Ohio organized a secret group most commonly known as The Knights of the Golden Circle, an organization which engaged in various anti-Union and treasonable activities. Further south in the state they blew up railroad bridges, killed Union men, threatened their families, and in one instance even stopped court proceedings.

The Army had to guard the Illinois Central bridge over the Big Muddy river the entire time of the war. When the draft began, they tried to obstruct it and sheltered draft evaders and deserters.

In Washington County, where they had very little support, they met at night in a clearing in the Elkhorn Bottoms, west of Plum Hill. Thus northern states were divided into military departments, with troops always present, and ticklish situations arose over the division of authority between civil and military. In the summer of 1864, the people of Nashville awoke one Saturday morning to find the city under martial law, held by a squadron of Union Cavalry, who invaded the town looking for deserters, draft evaders and others suspected of treason. It is said that several such hurriedly left town in women's garb. The troops took others into custody before leaving on Monday.

What seems rather amazing today is the fact that the census of 1890 showed 800 Negro residents in this county, with a scattering in every township. One woman, a Mrs. Rivers, who had come through this county as an escaped slave on the underground returned to Nashville and for years worked for the Needles family. Another, still remembered, was Peter Parley, who lived in New Minden and for years was an engineer for a threshing crew.

The returning soldiers organized a veterans' organization called the Grand Army of the Republic, or GAR, with a woman's auxiliary called the Women's relief Corps. This became a powerful group in both county and state politics, and was one of the chief mainstays of the Republican Party, which with few exceptions carried this county by a good plurality from 1860 on. Both groups lasted until after World War I, the Women's Relief Corps until the middle 1920s.

The last surviving Union veteran in the county was John Meyer of Addieville, who lived an active life until well after ninety.

The new A.T.&T. microwave tower is a landmark in Pilot Knob township.

The Oakdale Microwave Radio Relay Tower

The Oakdale microwave radio relay tower pictured here is located ten miles south of Nashville, in Pilot Knob township, a facility of the Long Lines Department of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, a new landmark in the county.

It is one of many similar installations spaced at twenty to thirty mile intervals along a route from Butler, Pa. to Oakland, Calif.

The 307-foot-high tower, situated on a ground elevation of 535 feet, has been in service since 1965, and provides message and network video service to St. Louis and Kansas City.

The poured concrete building adjacent to the tower is air conditioned to maintain a constant inside temperature of 75 degrees for the equipment. It contains a diesel engine alternator which, in an emergency, would provide it with three week's power supply. Eight people are employed at the installation.
WOODEN SHOES

Today’s generation rarely sees a wooden shoe being worn. But at the turn of the century, up until the early twenties, wooden shoes were worn on many Washington County farms, especially by the older folk. They brought the shoes from their native Germany, and the habit was deeply inrooted, slow to die.

One of the artisans who made wooden shoes in the county was the late Christ Lohmeier, who resided near Okawville. Mr. Lohmeier learned the trade as a boy in his native Germany, and when he settled in the county, he found there was a steady market for his product. He made wooden shoes for nearly sixty years.

The photo showing him making a pair of shoes out of maple blocks was taken long years ago. He could fashion a shoe out of a block of maple in less than an hour. Some of the shoes he made are collectors’ items today. His artistry died with him, and the clap-clapping wooden shoe today is nothing but a nostalgic memory.

The shoes had their purpose. They were easy to slip into, or out of. The wearer never brought them inside, but left them on the step. They were waterproof, and were worn until the patina of use was a dull sheen of darkness. They were excellent to administer a swift kick to the side of some recalcitrant heifer refusing to stand still to be milked. Walking had its own impact when the shoes were worn. The initial wearer walked something like a duck because of the stability of the shoe, yet the user soon learned the “swing” necessary to their use.

The late Christ Lohmeier, who for sixty years made wooden shoes in the county.
"The Plague" in Washington County

On a blacktop road leading north from Germantown is a huge cross standing in a pasture, a memorial to the dread years of a cholera epidemic in this part of the state. Many people pass here, but very few seem to know the story of the cross. Factually, it has been there for over a century.

The story of this cross began in the terrible cholera epidemic years of 1831-49, when people died like flies in southern Illinois. St. Louis had 601 deaths in a single week. An entire farm family of ten were wiped out over night at Eagle Prairie near Lebanon. Coulterville, Fayetteville, Mascoutah, Okawville, Germantown, Breese and Carlyle, all had staggering death tolls. No one knew how to stop the epidemic. Called the Black Plague, it raced through the country like a prairie fire.

People sprayed the premises with lime; fires were fed with sulphur; even boiling vinegar, tar and burning coffee was used, all to no avail.

It was during these days that John Altepeter, a Germantown farmer and father of a large family, made a covenant with God: spare his family, and he would erect a fitting monument for all time as evidence of his faith.

Miraculous as it sounds, the Altepeter family were spared. The father went out to the woods lot, hewed

Continued

Site of a cholera death in Washington County.
out a cross from two stalward limbs, and mounted it in his farm pasture, facing the road, so all could see. The cross has been there ever since. Wooden ones rotted away and were replaced. Now the cross is of durable concrete.

On this side of the river, in Washington County, the plague struck just as disastrously. It caught the pioneer, heading west in his Conestoga wagon; it trapped the pioneer in his log cabin. Many of the trailside graves, which were unmarked, have since been lost. Many of the county's early cemeteries have burials that were the result of “the sickness.”

The disease struck hard in the Elkton community, where it was labeled as spotted fever, an eruptive disease, accompanied by high temperatures. Today it might have fallen under the label of cerebrospinal meningitis and typhus. The date here was 1862.

Rhoda Rountree Rohde died here on April 8, 1862, leaving a small baby. Philip Reuter lost several children, two dying in one day. A son, Gustav, age three, survived but was stricken blind. It was not uncommon at that time to bury two or even three children in a single grave.

Oldtimers in the Elkton community tell of the “death” of a mother who was being prepared for burial, when a faint pulse was noticed. The woman recovered.

There is still standing in the county the ruins of an old house in which a woman, Mrs. Elizabeth McClellan, died of cholera in 1851. The house, shown here, is a ruin, located between McKinley Station and Oakdale.

Space does not permit the expansion of this article on “the sickness,” exploring the many incidents of personal loss as loved ones succumbed to the disease. Remember, there were no antibiotics in those days; the practicing physicians knew little relative to a strange epidemic. People fell sick one day, were interred the next. These were times of trial that will long be remembered in history.

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**TWO NEGROES HANGED AT NASHVILLE IN 1892**

There are a few senior citizens residing in Washington County who will recall the sensational murder of Marcus Deitsh at Richview on the night of December 26, 1891. Deitsh was an itinerant peddler who resided at Richview and hawked his wares in the area. A Russian Jew by birth, he was a familiar figure to many. He was genial, well liked, and didn’t mind the name of “Mike, the little Peddler,” that his customers pinned on him. He did a flourishing business.

Then one morning his body was found in a pathway near his boarding house, his skull bashed in, and his throat cut. Evidently he had been murdered for his money, as he usually carried a sizeable sum on his person.

In the course of time the guilty parties were arrested, Tom Davis and Henry Diekerson, two negroes who lived in Richview. They were lodged in the county jail at Nashville, and the long prosecution begun. They were finally sentenced to be hanged, and before going to the gallows, made a full confession of the crime.

They had waylaid Deitsh, beat him down with clubs, before they robbed him. Later, fearing he might regain consciousness, they crept back to the scene and cut his throat with a jackknife.

The two were hanged at 11:29 a.m., Saturday, May 11, 1892, from a scaffold built within an enclosure in the courtyard at Nashville. Sheriff Sam White was in charge of the hanging.

*An Earlier Death Sentence*

While this was the first judicial execution ever held in Washington County, it was not the first death sentence imposed here. In 1862, James Ambrose was sentenced to be hanged in Nashville for the murder of an uncle in St. Clair County the year previously. Amos Watts was then State’s Attorney, and Salem Goodner was sheriff. Ambrose had killed his uncle with a shotgun. The county jail then stood in the southeast corner of the public square, and as the scaffold was being erected in sight of the condemned man’s cell, he swore repeatedly that it never would be used. He was right in his belief, for the day before the execution, Gov. Yates of Illinois commuted his sentence to life imprisonment. He was pardoned eight years later, and returned to work as a carpenter. But ironically, he was caught in a falling wall soon afterward and killed.
EARLY DAYS OF RICHVIEW

Let's turn the clock backward a century or more, and retrace the steps of those men and women who built our first communities, churches, schools and stores. Old Richview was laid out in 1839 by Wm. Livesay. In early days it was called Richmond. First settler was James Severs. Following close upon his footsteps came Joseph Barber, Asa Foster, John Tate, James Gore and H. O. Whittenberg. They built the first school, a log structure, at Grand Point.

Cornelius Dorsey opened the first store. Richview grew, soon had five stores, two blacksmith shops, a wagon shop, and three physicians.

In 1852, when the Illinois Central Railroad laid their tracks through the county, the site was about one-half mile east of Old Town. In 1854, the railroad company started a new addition to the town, built a depot, and called the station Richview. One of the old residents who was living at that time told how the en-

Continued

Presumably the oldest building still standing in Richview, still in use, is the Reed Grocery, shown here. Operated by Delmar Reed, who has been there for 57 years, the building is about 115 years old.
tire populace of Old Town came down to see the first train pass through.

The new town took root, and in a short time the two separate communities, Old Town and new, had a combined population of a thousand, with the following business places: House and Bingham, Joel Edmiston, C. W. Oppenlander, W. W. Shanks, Samuel G. House, Cooper and Wall, and L. R. Barners, all in the general store business. W. S. Merrill had a drug store; B. F. Willis, hardware; Wm. Sproul and John H. Atkins, furniture; R. B. Keyes, undertaker. H. P. Ingram and J. Dillingham had meat markets; N. F. Tate. Wm. Sproul and James Withchurch had blacksmith shops.

L. Benjamin and Morgan Woolley had a flour mill; S. J. Chapman, a castor oil mill; Holcomb & Cooper ran the exchange bank; S. P. Cooper was proprietor of the Richview House: E. Harvey ran the American House, and S. T. Howard and John Bell were lumber dealers.

Professional men included Drs. W. H. Burns, H. B. Lucas, G. W. Downey and J. B. Houston. John Breeze was the town lawyer; E. Wright was police magistrate. Geo. T. Hoke was justice of the peace and notary public.

Grand Lodge No. 152, of the Illinois Order of Masons, was once the most flourishing lodge in the county.

Another historic institution at Richview was Washington Seminary, projected by a few leading citizens who desired, as stated in their first deed, to establish a school of elevated character to diffuse the fine benefits of higher education. As an incentive, the Illinois Central donated 75 lots upon which the school was to be built. These lots sold in June, 1857, for $4,000.

The foundation was laid in October, 1857. The lower story was divided in two rooms, and a grade school opened. N. E. Way, assisted by his sister, Mrs. Cope, were the teachers for two years. Miss Minnie Graham, later Mrs. Moody, also taught. Prof. H. C. Hillman assisted Mrs. Cope, and a Miss Irwin followed. But the building was found to be too large and expensive, and by a vote of the district the trustees sold the seminary to R. G. Williams for $1500 on August 22, 1864. It was resold to S. J. P. Anderson, D. D., of St. Louis in 1870, later resold by his heirs to Rev. Edgar Clark of Sterling, Ill.

The seminary was incorporated in 1865 with a board of 30 trustees, with power 5 to grant degrees. It had a full college charter. Its students were taught current educational courses, as well as geometry, navigation, astronomy, chemistry, Latin and Greek.

The first church in Richview was the Methodist Episcopal, organized at the home of Samuel White. Later the first Methodist Episcopal church was built in Old Richview.

The first Baptist church was organized in 1855. Elder Wm. Mitchell was the first pastor. Membership was 53.

The Presbyterian church was organized in 1863, original members being 25. The brick building they erected was dedicated in 1865.

The Richview Phoenix, first newspaper here, was published by M. L. McCord in 1856, and continued until March 1858, when the press was moved to Centralia.

A Hamlet Called Plum Hill

The small community of Plum Hill is without doubt the only hamlet of its size in the county with two places of worship. The St. John's E. and R. Church building is in the center of the photo as the camera faces south, and the former Bielefeldt store, now a meeting place of Jehovah's Witnesses, is in the far right. Busy route 160 intersects the two.
Washington County has several unusual memorials, but the one that really is unique is shown here, the Brockschmidt family anvil, now permanently mounted at the gateway to the Brockschmidt village park at Venedy.

The 700-pound anvil was brought to this country well over a century ago from Germany, the three months voyage across the Atlantic being by sailboat.

The anvil has been in the Brockschmidt family well over a century, is heavier than those in use today. It also is shaped differently.

The Joseph Kinyon family was the first to settle in the area that later became Venedy, in 1822. Fifteen years later, G. H. Brockschmidt bought out Kinyon’s land interests, and became the first German settler here, if not the first in the county.

Brockschmidt came from a little town in Germany called Vene. He merely added the “dy” and Venedy was born.

There is no “spreading chestnut tree” shading the old anvil today, but it is reminiscent of the pioneers who labored hard to change the brome-sledged prairies of this county into fertile farms. The anvil in its gold paint is reminiscent of an age that is gone, growing more valuable with the passing of the years.
The photo on this page shows all that is left of an old pioneer burial plat known as the Weaver Cemetery. When this writer was a boy, there were a number of graves here. But since then, vandals and time itself, have all but destroyed the old cemetery.

The location is five miles south of Okawville, about a half mile south of Illinois 460, in what is now the Schuetz pasture, on the right side of the blacktop road leading south from what is known locally as Ead’s Corner. The burial site was on a hill facing Weaver Creek.

The creek itself was named after the Weaver families who settled on it. It is a tributary of the Elk-horn, and crosses Plum Hill township from east to west. Sometime ago, vandals threw most of the stones into the creek, but Mr. August Schuetz retrieved most of them and piled them back, under a tree where the original graves were located. The Weaver name has died out in the area of the county where these first settlers carved out their homesteads from the forest.

The Weaver Cemetery — after a century of neglect.
Beaucoup Once Largest Town in County

Following closely upon the Lively Massacre near Covington, the settling of Washington County took on considerable speed. The most rapid growth areas centered around Beaucoup, four miles east of Nashville, and in the Elkton-Oakdale area, in the southwestern part of the county.

According to old-time records, there was considerable rivalry between these two settlements, both as to size and in religion. In the Beaucoup area the Methodists predominated. At Elkton, the Baptists had the plurality. At Oakdale, the first settlers were members of one or two branches of the Presbyterian Church, the Scotch Covenanters (the Reformed Church), or the United Presbyterian.

On the whole, this was a healthy cleavage, although there were times when denominational differences even influenced politics. For instance, in the political campaign of 1826, the candidates were asked to declare themselves in advance, concerning the site for the new county seat.

Continued

The L&N depot at Beaucoup before it was razed.
By the time Illinois was admitted as a State in 1818, Beaucoup probably was the largest community in the county, although there are no existing records to prove it. Its roster is replete with such family names as White, Whittenburg, Livesay, Lyons, Henry, Anderson, Jack, Walker and others. Many of these names have come down through the history of the county to the present day.

In the Elkton-Oakdale area were the Ayers, Evans, Rountree, Maxwell, McClurkin, Hood, and McCord families, most of them represented in our present generation.

William Ayers was the first settler (1816) in the Elkton-Oakdale area, and among the first in the county. He stopped for a time on Elkhorn Creek, near a road that led to present Fayetteville, and not far from the site that later became the village of Elkton. He afterwards moved to Ayers Point (Oakdale), which is located on an old Indian Trace that now is known as the Vincennes-Kaskaskia Trail. Incidentally, this was the route traversed by early Pony Express riders between Vincennes and Fort Kaskaskia.

The Organ in the Venedy Church

Without doubt, one of the most historic pipe organs in the state graces the balcony of the San Salvador Ev.-Lutheran Church at Venedy. Recently restored, the organ has an historic background that adds to its charm.

Delving into the records of the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church, it was found that the organ was brought from Germany to St. Louis in 1839 by the Saxon Fathers, along with four church bells and three bolts of cloth to be used for vestments. Its first destination was the Old Trinity Lutheran Church, then located on Fourth Street near the St. Louis riverfront.

Evidently it was the first organ used by the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church, a fact that enhances its value today.

When a new, larger Trinity Church was built in St. Louis at Grand and Soulard, it was found the organ was not large enough for the new building, so it was put up for sale. San Salvador Church at Venedy purchased it, through the efforts of its pastor, the late Dr. C. F. W. Walther.

Six Venedy farmers volunteered to send over wagons and teams to St. Louis, to bring the organ to its new home. The year was 1865, and our country was in the last days of the Civil War. The trek to St. Louis via horse and wagon was a momentous journey for the six farmers, involving a week’s time and several overnight stops enroute.

The organ has been at Venedy ever since.

Back in 1963, the congregation was about ready to scrap the ancient musical instrument. Pipes were off-key, some didn’t even respond. The organ hadn’t been tuned since World War I. The debate arose whether it should be rebuilt or replaced with a new electronic type instrument.

Then an organ specialist, Richard Hosier, examined the ancient organ and labeled it “finest.” It was rebuilt, its 391 pipes cleaned and re-glued. Inside its mechanism were found the skeletons of four birds, many insects, and the dust of years. Hosier set a value of $20,000 on the organ. That’s a tidy sum for an ant object that almost went into the junk pile!

The late Rev. E. J. Saleska, former pastor at Venedy at the keyboard of the historic pipe organ.
Where Two Railroads Cross

Ashley Once "Trail's End" For War Refugees

If Ashley hadn't been exactly 98 miles from Cairo, it still might be nothing more than a whistle stop of the St. Louis Division of the Illinois Central Railroad. But in that statistical fact lies a story, musty with age, but most appropriate for this history of the county.

During the Civil War, with most of the South devastated, refugees started the slow trek North. Realizing there was a better future for these luckless people north of the Mason-Dixon line, the Government promised free railroad fare for one hundred miles north of this line.

Ashley, strung along the newly-laid tracks of the Illinois Central, was the "jumping off" place for many of these refugees. Daily they came in droves, riding freight trains, and huddled in cattle cars, to get away from the poverty of the South.

The people of Ashley suddenly found themselves responsible for the care of a long line of refugees. Feeding them was the big problem; finding housing was another. Most were penniless, with their meager belongings in carpet bags.

At the time, the John Robinson Shows, one of the larger circuses of the day, heard about the plight of these people and donated two hundred dollars worth of food, which saved many a life until an adjustment could be made in this strange territory.

Continued
Today, the I. C. and the L. & N. Railroads cross at Ashley, the only place in the county where two major railroads cross.

Men toiled with wheelbarrows and spades to build the right-of-ways through virgin forest and unbroken prairie sod. An old record at Ashley shows that a crew of about a hundred men worked for weeks to complete the earthwork at Double Rock Creek, to the north.

The first locomotives were fired with cordwood, which was stored at convenient spots along the right-of-way. At first the newly laid road was without rock ballast, and mud splashed over the coaches during the wet runs, while in dry seasons, the passing of a train set up a dust cloud that could be seen for miles.

The train consisted of two or three freight cars, with a combination baggage-passenger car.

Even today, more than a century later, one finds names sprinkled throughout the Ashley area, reminiscent of those early days when the most important item in the day was a morsel of food.

**ST. CHARLES OF BORROMEO, DuBOIS**

St. Charles of Borromeo Roman Catholic Church at DuBois has been visited by tourists from all over the nation because of its unusual beauty. Its twin spires rise 116 feet and dominate the tiny town. The brick structure is 131 feet long, 80 feet wide, and 58 feet high. A combination of Roman and Byzantine architecture, its pictorial windows are art treasures. The present pastor, Rev. Paulin Dobkowski, succeeds the late Msgr. Jos. Ceranski, who served the parish for 64 consecutive years, until his death in 1962 at the age of 83. In fact, Msgr. Ceranski helped build the huge church, working with the carpenters and masons, day after day.

The name of the town, DuBois, is French, but the community is predominantly Polish, with a slow infiltration of German. In fact, the town has two names. On the Illinois road map it is listed as DuBois. But until the Illinois Central Railroad razed its depot here, it was called Bois. The Post Office directory of Post Offices spells DuBois as one word, as do several mapmakers. But the new official highway map of Illinois spells it Du Bois.

The community, first called Coloma, was formed by a tight group of ten Polish-Catholic families, who fled Europe to escape the Prussian Kulturkampf, and the religious persecution imposed by the German Chancellor, Bismarck. Even today, the Poles predominate. The names on the rural mail boxes are tongue-twisters. But the younger generation rarely use the mother tongue.

St. Charles Church towers over the town like some giant. About 200 families in the farm area surrounding it are its mainstay. Currently there are 126 pupils in its school, taught by three sisters of Notre Dame. Various writers, enthusiastic about the church, have labelled it “The Cathedral of the Prairie.”

*St. Charles Borromeo Roman Catholic Church at DuBois, and (inset) the late Msgr. Joseph Ceranski who served that charge for 64 years.*
OLD SALEM

This volume is devoting considerable space to old Washington County cemeteries for one reason if nothing else: a matter of historic record, long neglected. One of these pioneer burial grounds is Old Salem, described here. Located in the extreme southwest part of Washington County, seldom visited except by area residents, it is nonetheless, a large cemetery, replete with the names of many veterans of the different wars, and once the site of a church. Burials are still made there. The cemetery is fenced, and given more care than most old burial plats.

The oldest document pertaining to this cemetery and church is in the possession of Willis Coulter, cemetery trustee, and is dated February 17, 1833, showing its great age.

According to the Cyclopedia Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, the Salem Church once standing adjacent to this cemetery, was organized in 1844 as an Associate Reformed Church, and disbanded in 1867.

The Mud Creek congregation of the United Presbyterian Church was organized on June 1, 1871, disbanded in 1890. Evidently both these congregations used the same church building, although there is no record to prove it.

The late Dr. S. Cameron Edmiston of Los Angeles, California, reminisced at length about the Old Salem Church, which he had attended as a boy:

"The old church on Mud Creek is no more, but the cemetery is still there, occupied by many of our old neighbors. In a recent visit there, it wasn't difficult to close one's eyes and visualize those scenes of long ago, the farmers' rigs, the horses tied to the trees, tails swishing at the insects bothering them; the drone of the preacher's voice, and the singing of the Psalms. At intermission, the old folk would huddle together in eager friendship, telling of their joys and problems. Perhaps a boy and a girl would walk down the hill, hand in hand, the beginning of a romance.

"It was an attractive church for its day, had three windows on two sides, with a double door at the front, and a wide aisle up the center, with pews on either side. There was a raised dias for the preacher, and to his left was a chair for the precentor who lined the Psalms for the congregation to sing, two lines at a time."

Five soldiers of the War of 1812, James C. Kennedy, Daniel McMillan, Sr., John Wylie, Francis B. Green and James Gillespie, Sr. are interred here, showing the age of this burial ground.


There are no World War I soldiers buried here, and a single interment of a World War II casualty, the grave of James Gillespie, 1913-1965.

One of the oldest stones still standing here is that of Martha Hemphill, wife of William M. Hemphill, who died January 4, 1839 in her 33rd year.

It is interesting to note the mistakes in grammar on the epitaph. The word Heaven, for instance is spelled "Heven." Several other words (if you use a magnifying glass) you'll find are spelled phonetically.

Services are still held at Old Salem on Memorial Day, under the auspices of the American Legion of Marissa and other interested persons.

A document dated January 10, 1848, in the possession of Miss Clara Mathews of Marissa, is of interest. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigners promise to pay the sums next to our names for the ministerial labors of the Rev. Mr. Harshaw at the Salem Meeting House on Mud Creek: John R. Lyons $5.00; Henry L. McGuire $8.00; Thomas Gillespie $5.00; a man named East, $3.00; Arch McFie $3.00; James McIntire $5.00; Anny McGuire $1.50; John Craig $2.00; William McKee $2.00, H. L. McGuire for 1849, $5.50."

There are over 300 stones in Old Salem. Herewith is a list of the family names taken from the stones still in existence:

Continued

On Mud Creek, which is an east-west stream through Lively Grove township, is still visible one of the largest Indian mounds in the county, mute evidence that a prehistoric culture thrived here, long before the first white pioneers moved in.

Geographically, Old Salem Cemetery is slightly northeast of Marissa, within Washington County borders.

Old Salem Cemetery, in the extreme southwest corner of Washington County, is a spot very few residents know even exists, although Memorial Services are held here yearly.
Washington County, with the rest of the nation, went through a depression during the tumultuous thirties that still shows its scars. Perhaps you're too young to remember. But many of the readers of this book still poignantly remember. There were bread lines and bankruptcies. Financiers jumped out of windows when the stock market crashed.

Photo shows Supervisor John Grattendick and helper, with a shipment of food for the indigent.

Yes, it got that bad!

But Washington County, staple and economically conservative, got off lightly. No one actually starved to death. There were no jobs. And then the WPA came along. America pulled itself out of the muck by its own bootstraps.

Remember?
MOMENTOUS DAY!

The late afternoon of March 15, 1938 will long be remembered in Washington County. For suddenly there was a cry of “Tornado!” and there it was, roaring and hissing, rolling up from the southwest. The funnel was pronounced, a spiral of death from the black cloud above to the ground below.

People at Okawville stood enthralled, watching the whiplash of the funnel, spewing up debris as it moved over the prairie. Each time it struck a farmstead, there was a whirling mass of debris and shattered buildings.

Death was moving over the prairie, inexorable, cutting a swath of destruction as the storm moved into the northwest.

And then, miracle of miracles, as the funnel approached the L&N section houses on the southwest outskirts of Okawville, it suddenly whipped up into the cloud-mass, disintegrated. There was the clatter of falling bricks from chimneys, the roar of wind high in the cloud, then a great silence, as if the town itself was suddenly wrapped in a giant vacuum.

But death had passed it by!

Soon the reports drifted in, of farm damage to the southwest: the church was leveled at Darmstadt; Belleville was hard-hit.

On a farm near St. Libory, a cow moved about, with a long piece of wood impaled in her back; straws were driven deep into tree trunks; chickens were alive, but denuded of their feathers. The freaks of the storm were amazing. Death and destruction told of its fury. But by the grace of God Okawville escaped.

Such is the fury of a tornado.

There have been other tornadoes and storms in Washington County, down through the years. There will be storms in the future. Man talks much about the vagaries of the wind, the weather, but somehow it is bigger than he is, despite all his twentieth-century technocracy.
VENEDY MILL NEARING CENTURY MARK

The large flour mill, now being updated at Venedy, is a product of another century. The first mill was erected in the year 1859 by J. F. Brockschmidt and company. It was operated by this firm for two years, then became the property of the Brockschmidt Brothers. It was destroyed by fire in 1873, rebuilt the same year. The substantial brick structure still stands, and is used daily.

From 1873 to 1879 the mill was owned and operated by the firm of J. F. Brockschmidt and Son. During those years it had a capacity of 200 barrels of flour in a day. After 1879 the property stood idle for about ten years. Then in 1890 it was remodeled to a roller system and was operated by Herman Rede and William Meyer. When Rede died two years later, Peter Jost took his place.

During the five years that Jost was in the firm William Sieving was a miller apprentice. In 1897 the firm dissolved and William Meyer became the sole owner.

On January 7, 1898, disaster struck the mill when the twin boilers blew up. Fortunately the blast occurred when the mill was idle, and there were no casualties.

The mill stood idle until the turn of the century. On July 1, 1900, the work of remodeling and repairing was started, and by August 15 the mill was back in operation. From this time until 1923 it operated on a reduced scale of about a hundred barrels of flour daily.

Then came World War I, and again the mill was idled. Finally acquired by Wm. Noser, the mill was sold to the Huegely Elevator Co. of Nashville in 1946. Today, the same is operated as a feed warehouse and service institution by the Washington County Service Company, with Stanley Schuessler as manager. The huge brick building is a landmark in Washington County, and seems about as rugged today as it was when it was built.
THE WATER WITCH

A county history would not be quite complete without mention of its native water witches, regardless of whether or not you believed in the "science." Washington County had its share, down through the years, still has a few devoted followers of the willow twig.

Pictured here is the late Joe Palek, Sr., who was known as one of the best. With a peach twig held before him, as shown in the photo, he would start walking. And suddenly the peach twig would dip sharply downward, quiver and twitch in his hands. Invariably there was water where he indicated.

There were a dozen, more or less, all with a certain degree of fame. Some people scoffed, others believed. But whether or not you believed, the water witch was often called. Washington County, rural as it is, has more than the usual number of wells. Each farm has at least one, most of them quite deep, to assure good, cold, germ-free water. The water witch of the past century located many of these subterranean streams.

The late Joe Palek Sr., witching water on a farm near Plum Hill.
Elkton Once Was Thriving Community

Although Elkton today is a small roadside community, almost forgotten in the southern part of the county, its life centered around the Union Church, it once was a thriving place.

The town itself was laid out by Henry H. Talbot and James Steel, Jr., in 1837. John Raney was the first settler in Elkton Precinct in 1822. He located on the old Vincennes-Kaskaskia Trace about two miles from Mud Creek. He was followed by William Rountree, Sr., a year later. Rountree, a Virginian, settled in section 16, present site of the village. He died at his homestead there in 1859, left a large family.

A first settler in Elkhorn Prairie, the Hon. James M. Rountree was later state's attorney of Washington County.

His father, Greenville Rountree, came to this same prairie in 1816, lived there all his life, had eight children, died in 1860.

A post office was established by Thomas Bird in 1850 at Ayers Point, to the east, now Oakdale.

Elkton once maintained three general stores, kept by J. Blum, August Fisher and Henry Dunkhorst, who also was an early postmaster. There also was a harness

Continued
shop, two blacksmith shops, a hotel. The two physicians were Dr. R. E. Vernor and Dr. S. F. Wehr. A later (and final) physician at Elkton was Dr. Jack.

There also were two churches. The old brick Ev.-Lutheran church stood just west of the Lathrup property. The Union Church (still in use) was built in 1875. Trustees at that time were L. R. Kinyon, Dr. J. J. Troutt and C. M. Hawkins. The last trustees elected were John Reinhardt, A. C. Shubert and Charles Rezba. Sunday School is still held here, with John Reinhardt as superintendent.

West of Lively Grove was a church known as the Baptist Church of Elkton. Later it was reorganized and services shifted to the Elkton Union Church.

The Elkton Lodge No. 453, I.O.O.F., was organized Oct. 10, 1871. Charter members were M. Fox, R. B. Klane, H. F. Dancke, Hy. Bollmeier, F. Hulsemann and H. Hahne.

The land, now the Venedy Coal Company, was once owned by John Kinyon in 1833. He sold out and went to Missouri, then returned and settled in Elkhorn Prairie, in the area that is now the Venedy community. Joseph Kinyon was another pioneer settler in the Elkhorn Prairie. He once operated a horse-driven mill.

The first store in Elkton was opened in the residence of William Rountree by H. H. Talbot; the last store in Elkton was owned and operated by George Rezba in the old Blum building. — Contributed by Mollie (Kinyon) Rezba.

“Long - Sweetenin”

Great-great-grandmother called it “long - sweetenin’.” Grandmother referred to it as sorghum. Grandfather called it molasses, and planted the sugar cane needed for its making.

At one time, Washington County had several sorghum mills that operated each Autumn, squeezing juice from the sugar cane brought in to the mill, then cooking it into sorghum. Very few county homes were without it.

But today, sorghum has lost much of its popularity. The mills are gone — at least most of them. If you look long enough, you might find sorghum on the supermarket shelves, but only in limited quantity.

America’s taste for cane sorghum has waned, for no apparent reason. It is a healthy product, tasty too. But corn syrup has taken its place on the breakfast hotcakes.

Other legumes have taken the place of sugar cane on most farms. If it is raised, it is a minor item.

The photo illustrating this page was taken years ago, when the Juenger Sorghum Mill, in the southwest part of the county, was at its heyday. Farmers brought their sugar cane, stripped and topped, to this mill in great quantity. An old steam threshing engine supplied the power, as well as steam for the cooking vats. The cane was first fed into a crusher that extracted the juice. Then the juice was cooked, and by a process of evaporation, turned into a golden syrup.

Some day, perhaps, the cane syrup will come back in a dressed-up can or bottle. But today its popularity has waned. What a pity!
In Memoriam

Check any obituary column, and you'll find the great and near-great, those rugged individuals who through faith and hard work, undying enthusiasm, and the will to "build a better mousetrap," find themselves at last on that enviable plateau called success. The people listed on this page deserve our respect, even though the recognition is posthumous. Perhaps we've missed some. If we have, the editors assure you it was not intentional:

Louis L. Bernreuter, who served as Circuit Judge in southern Illinois for over thirty years.

Major Herrin, first purchaser of government land in Washington County, settling near what is now Plum Hill, in 1815.

Reuben Wheless, early settler of Nashville ship, first cousin of President Andrew Johnson.

William Bradshy, first circuit clerk, county clerk, probate judge, surveyor and physician in Washington County.

Ptolemy Hosmer, attorney and representative in the State Assembly.

Andrew Bankson, one of the county's earliest settlers, delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1818.

Major John Wood, one of first settlers of Nashville, builder of the Wood Tavern, long a famous half-way house on the Shawneetown-St. Louis Trace; veteran of the Blackhawk War.

Thomas Seowell, made a brevet Brigadier General on the Civil War battlefield, died at the age of 25, while home on furlough at Nashville.

Abner Jackson, a freed slave, native of North Carolina, who celebrated his 100th birthday in 1876, and had a part in the 4th of July Centennial Celebration in Nashville that year, as one of the oldest men in the county.

William A. Rodenbarg, son of a German Methodist minister, spent his boyhood in the county, served as Representative in Congress prior to World War I.

John Calvin Archson of Oakdale township, the first man from Washington County to lose his life in World War I. He enlisted in the Second Marines on May 27, 1917, and embarked for France in September of that year. On April 13, 1918, he was hospitalized, having been the victim of a German gas attack. He returned to action after several weeks, and was seriously wounded on June 3. A leg wound necessitated amputation, and eleven days later death claimed him at the age of 23. He is buried in France.

June Smith, native of Irvington, who rose to the high office of Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court.

Thomas B. Needles, first Republican County Clerk, U. S. Marshell, Indian Territory, member of Dawes Commission which terminated tribal government of the five civilized Indian tribes in Oklahoma; state representative, state senator and auditor.

Ralph L. Maxwell, orphaned when his father lost his life in a Nashville coal mine accident, became a Circuit Judge, later Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court; died in office in the sixth year of his term.

Zenas H. Vernor, pioneer settler of Nashville; State Representative and member of the Constitutional Convention of 1848.

Francis G. Blair, native of Nashville, served as State Superintendent of Public Instruction in the 1920s.

Frederick E. W. Brink, who emigrated to Washington County from Minden, Germany in 1845; resident of Hoyleton; served two terms as State Senator.

George H. French, one of the faculty at the Irvington State University, later going to SIU at Carbondale; noted botanist and authority on insects; served as Assistant State Entomologist, holder of many scientific degrees and author of numerous scientific books; did pioneer research on cause and treatment of epilepsy and Bright's disease; lived to be ninety.

John Meyer of Addieville, last surviving Civil War veteran, who lived to the ripe age of 97 years, four months and 26 days. He died December 9, 1939.

Dr. Simeon P. Schroeder of Nashville, first physician in Illinois to successfully operate on an ob- cessed lung.


Homer Edmonds, Ashley, first reported casualty, World War II (Bataan).

General Walter Krueger, former Stone Church boy, Commander of the Sixth Army in the Pacific, World War II, awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by General Douglas MacArthur. He was one-time commandant at Jefferson Barracks. The Krueger family lived in the Stone Church area for about eight years.

Dr. Poul Schroeder, Nashville — served under the Gov. Henry Horner administration as State Psychiatrist; served as psychiatrist in the Nuremberg trials of World War II. Before his death, won national and international fame in the field of neurology and psychiatry.